



**New Brunswick
Labour Force Trends
April 2021**



Table of Contents

- Overview 2
 - Pre-Pandemic Trends 2
 - COVID-19 Pandemic 3
- Trends in Labour Force Participation 5
 - Pre-Pandemic Trends 5
 - COVID-19 Pandemic 6
- Industry Trends 7
 - Pre-Pandemic Trends 7
 - COVID-19 Pandemic 8
- Wages 10
 - Pre-Pandemic Trends 10
 - COVID-19 Pandemic 11
- Sub-Provincial 11
 - Pre-Pandemic Trends 11
 - COVID-19 Pandemic 12
- Education 14

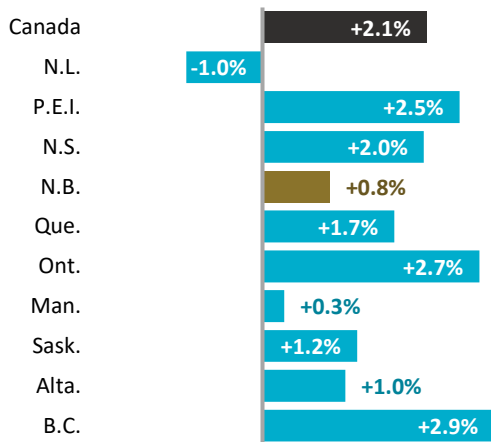
Overview¹

Pre-Pandemic Trends

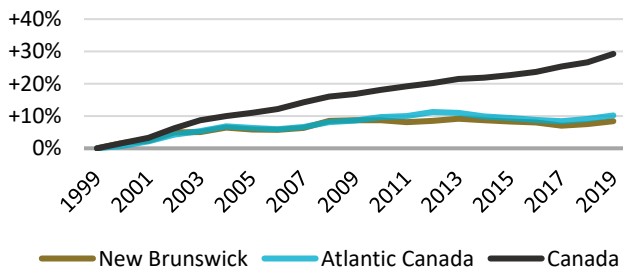
Throughout 2019, there were an average of 393,000 individuals participating in New Brunswick’s labour force (i.e. employed or actively looking for work), up 0.8% (+3,300) from 2018. This represented the second consecutive year of labour force growth in the province, after having had experienced four consecutive years of declines. Nationally the labour force grew 2.1%.

Recent growth to the number of labour force participants in New Brunswick has been driven primarily by increased international migration levels. This growth, however, has been (and will continue to be) limited by the significant number of retirements that have been occurring in the province in recent years.

Year-over-Year Change in Labour Force – 2018/19

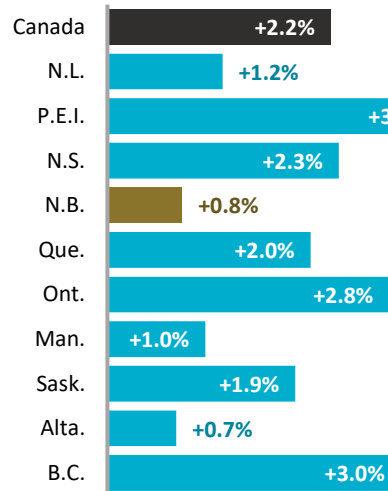


Labour Force Growth Relative to 1999 – N.B., Atlantic Canada and Canada

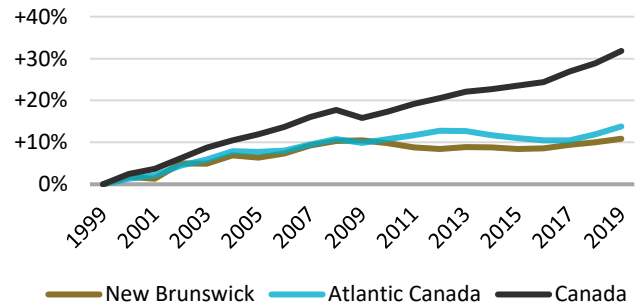


Within the labour force, the number of employed individuals (12-month average) in the province grew to 361,100 in 2019, up 0.8% (+2,700) from 2018. This represented the fourth consecutive year of employment growth in the province, after having had experienced two consecutive years of declines. Nationally employment increased by 2.2% year-over-year.

Year-over-Year Change in Employment – 2018/19



Employment Growth Relative to 1999 – N.B., Atlantic Canada and Canada

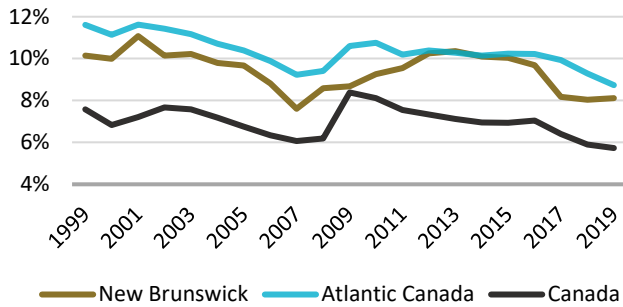


The year-over-year employment increase in the province was accompanied by a slight increase to the unemployment rate, from 8.0% to 8.1%. Leading up to this small increase, New Brunswick’s unemployment rate had decreased significantly between 2013 and 2018 (although still far exceeded the national rate of 5.7%).

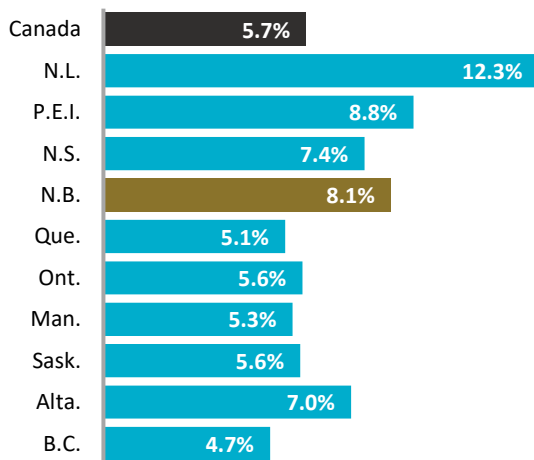
¹ Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Tables 14-10-0287 and 14-10-0327.

The recent downward trend in unemployment in the province has primarily been the result of increased employment opportunities arising as the result of retirements.

Unemployment Rate – N.B., Atlantic Canada and Canada



Unemployment Rate – 2019



Labour Force Characteristics – New Brunswick

	12-Month Averages		Selected Months (Seasonally Adjusted)			
	2019	2020	Feb 2020	Apr 2020	June 2020	Feb 2021
Population (Aged 15+)	642,700	646,900	645,900	646,300	646,700	648,400
Labour Force	393,000	390,700	394,000	363,600	395,400	394,200
Employment	361,100	351,600	365,400	315,300	354,700	359,200
Full-Time Employment	306,900	299,900	314,100	275,400	299,700	302,200
Part-Time Employment	54,200	51,700	51,300	40,000	55,100	57,000
Unemployment	31,900	39,100	28,600	48,300	40,700	35,000
Participation Rate	61.1%	60.4%	61.0%	56.3%	61.1%	60.8%
Employment Rate	56.2%	54.4%	56.6%	48.8%	54.8%	55.4%
Unemployment Rate	8.1%	10.0%	7.3%	13.3%	10.3%	8.9%

² Employed, worked zero hours includes employees and self-employed who were absent from work all week, but excludes people who have been away for reasons such as 'vacation,' 'maternity,' 'seasonal business' and labour dispute.'

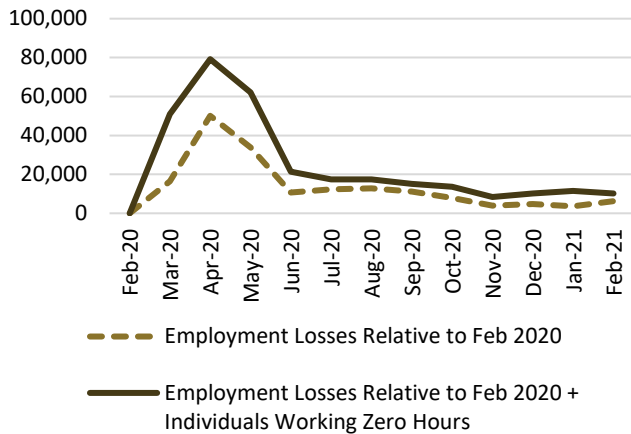
COVID-19 Pandemic

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the various restrictions and measures that were put in place in response to it, the labour market was significantly impacted.

After starting the year off by reaching record high employment levels, approximately 50,000 New Brunswickers lost their jobs between February and April. Despite this representing by far the largest two-month decline in employment on record (with comparable data available back to 1976), job loss figures fail to capture the full extent of the pandemic's impact. In addition to the previously mentioned employment losses, nearly 30,000 individuals, while still technically considered employed, were working zero hours (for reasons likely attributable to the pandemic²) during the initial lockdown and more than 6,000 individuals were working less than half of their usual hours.

While New Brunswick was significantly impacted at the onset of the pandemic, due to its relatively low case count, it was among the first provinces to begin to recover. In June, New Brunswick had the lowest unemployment rate in the country (tied with Manitoba), and ranked first among the provinces in terms of employment as a percentage of pre-pandemic (February) levels, at 97.1% (with Manitoba ranking second at 92.9%).

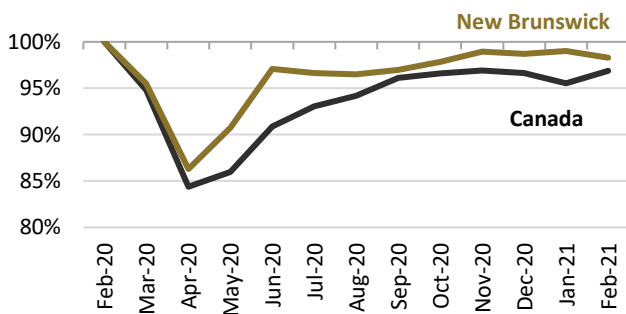
Employment Losses and Individuals Working Zero Hours Relative to February 2020 – New Brunswick (Seasonally Adjusted)



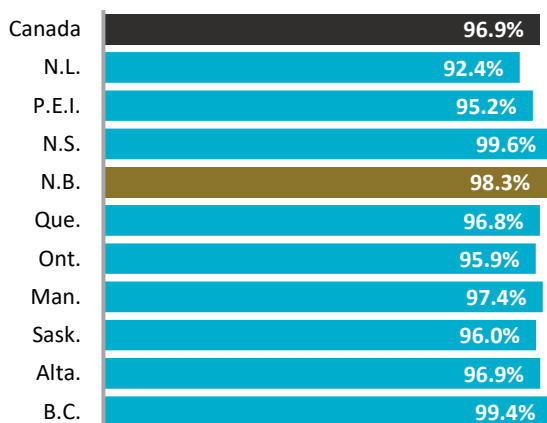
Its important to note that while labour force and employment levels towards the end of 2020 and through the beginning of 2021 pointed towards the economy being close to a full recovery, many workers were still working reduced hours and/or were employed in jobs that were only able to exist due to government support programs such as the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy. A full return to pre-pandemic levels of output will likely stretch into 2022 (or beyond).

Following this initial bounce back however, the recovery slowed down. As of February 2021, employment in New Brunswick had reached 98.3% of its February 2020 total (compared to 96.9% at a national level).

Employment Relative to February 2020 (Seasonally Adjusted)



Employment in February 2021 Relative to February 2020 (Seasonally Adjusted)



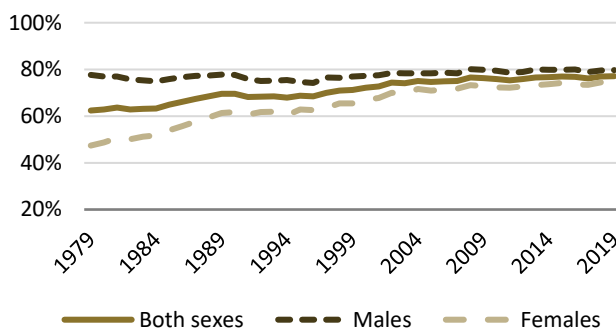
Trends in Labour Force Participation³

Pre-Pandemic Trends

Throughout the '70s, '80s, '90s and 2000s, New Brunswick's labour force participation rate rose slowly but steadily. Between 1979 and 2009, the participation rate among typical working-age individuals (aged 15 to 64 years) grew from 62.4% to 76.3%. Increases in labour force participation over this time were primarily driven by increased participation among women. During this time, the participation rate among typical working-age women in New Brunswick increased by 25.4 percentage points (from 47.4% to 72.8%), compared to 2.2 percentage points among typical working-age men (from 77.6% to 79.8%).

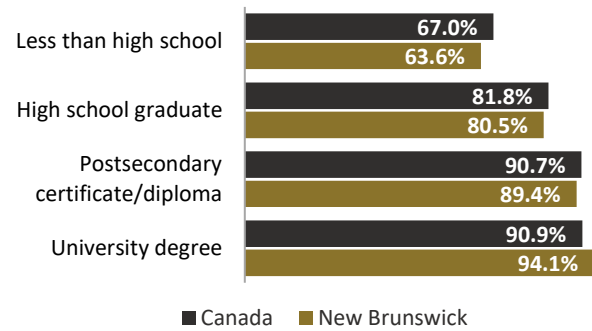
Since this time, increases in participation have slowed down. As of 2019, the participation rate among typical working-age individuals in the province was 77.1% (74.5% among women and 79.7% among men). Nationally, the typical working-age participation rate was 78.7% in 2019 (75.2% among women, 82.2% among men).

Participation Rate Among Population Aged 15 to 64 Years - New Brunswick



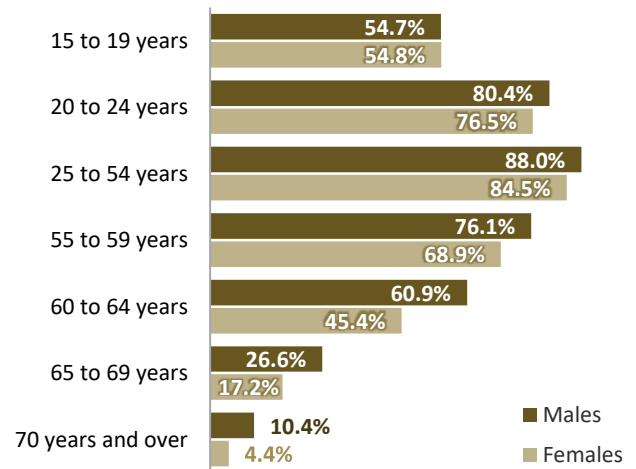
Recent increases in labour force participation among the typical working-age population have primarily been the result of increased participation among older individuals. Participation rates among younger age groups have generally not changed significantly since 2009.

Participation Rate Among the Population Aged 25 to 54 Years by Educational Attainment – 2019



Sex-specific participation rates, and the gaps between them, vary significantly by age; however, in general, women are less likely to be participating in the labour force than men across nearly all age categories (with the one exception in New Brunswick in 2019 being the “25 to 29 years” age range).

Participation Rate by Sex and Age Group – New Brunswick – 2019



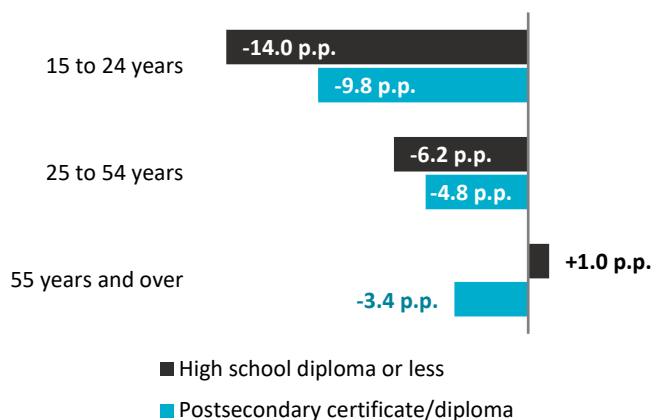
³ Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Tables 14-10-0117, 14-10-0118, 14-10-0287 and 14-10-0327.

COVID-19 Pandemic

While some workers were fortunate enough to only be laid off for a short period of time during the initial lockdown, many others were laid off indefinitely or permanently. This led to a sharp reduction in labour force participation, particularly among the youth population.

In April, the participation rate among individuals aged 15 to 24 years was down 11.3 percentage points year-over-year (50.9% in April 2020 compared to 62.2% in April 2019). This drop included a 14.0 percentage point year-over-year drop among individuals in this age range with only a high school diploma or less and a 9.8 percentage point drop among individuals with post-secondary credentials. These decreases were significantly larger than those seen among the population aged 25 years and over.

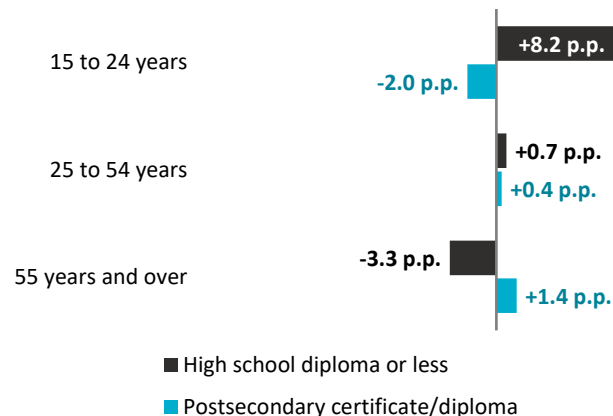
Year-over-Year Change in Participation Rate Between April 2019 and April 2020 by Age and Educational Attainment – New Brunswick



More recent estimates suggest that the participation rate in the province has since recovered to near pre-pandemic levels among many groups, despite unemployment remaining relatively high. While labour force participation among the youth population as a whole has seemingly recovered, participation among those with post-secondary credentials has continued to lag behind, while participation among youth with a high school diploma or less has seen a noticeable increase.

One factor that may be contributing to this trend could be the type of work that is available. Students and other youth without post-secondary credentials may be more willing than post-secondary graduates to accept low-skill and/or part-time job opportunities.

Year-over-Year Change in Participation Rate Between Dec 2019 to Feb 2020 and Dec 2020 to Feb 2021 (3-Month Averages) by Age and Educational Attainment – New Brunswick



Another group that has somewhat struggled to recover has been individuals aged 55 years and over with a high school diploma or less, particularly women.

Industry Trends⁴

Pre-Pandemic Trends

Employment in the following sectors was proportionally much more common in New Brunswick compared to the country as a whole in 2019:

- Fishing, hunting and trapping
- Forestry and logging and support activities for forestry
- Public administration
- Health care and social assistance

On the other hand, employment in the following sectors was proportionally much less common in New Brunswick compared to the country as a whole in 2019:

- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing
- Information, culture and recreation

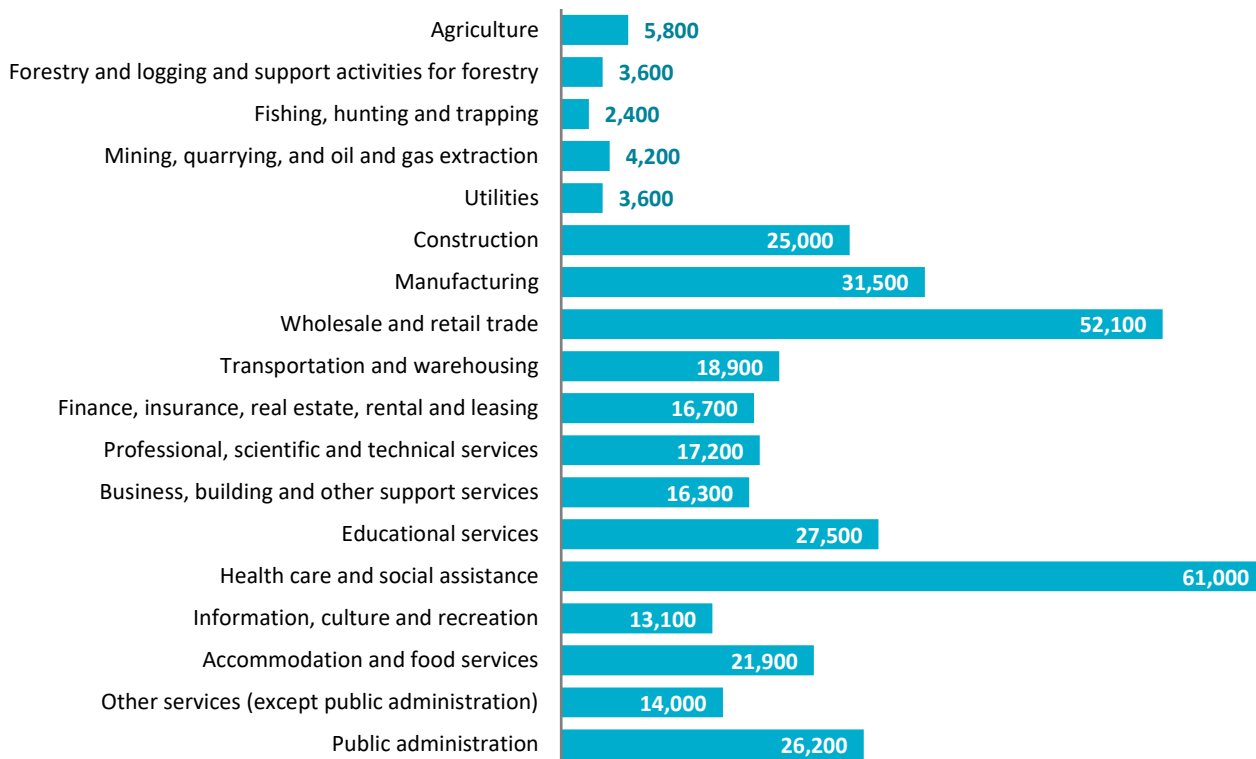
Between 2014 and 2019, the greatest employment growth was seen in the following sectors:

- Agriculture (+45.0%; 4,000 to 5,800)
- Information, culture and recreation (+20.2%; 10,900 to 13,100)
- Health care and social assistance (+18.0%; 51,700 to 61,000)
- Public administration (+16.4%; 22,500 to 26,200)

In contrast, the following sectors saw the greatest employment losses during this time:

- Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (-26.3%; 5,700 to 4,200)
- Business, building and other support services (-16.4%; 19,500 to 16,300)
- Forestry and logging and support activities for forestry (-16.3%; 4,300 to 3,600)

Employment by Sector - New Brunswick - 2019



⁴ Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Tables 14-10-0023 and 14-10-0026.

COVID-19 Pandemic

There were very few businesses that were not affected by the pandemic-driven lockdown measures. The bulk of the job losses that occurred at the onset of the pandemic were in the private sector however, with businesses in the following sectors being among the hardest hit:

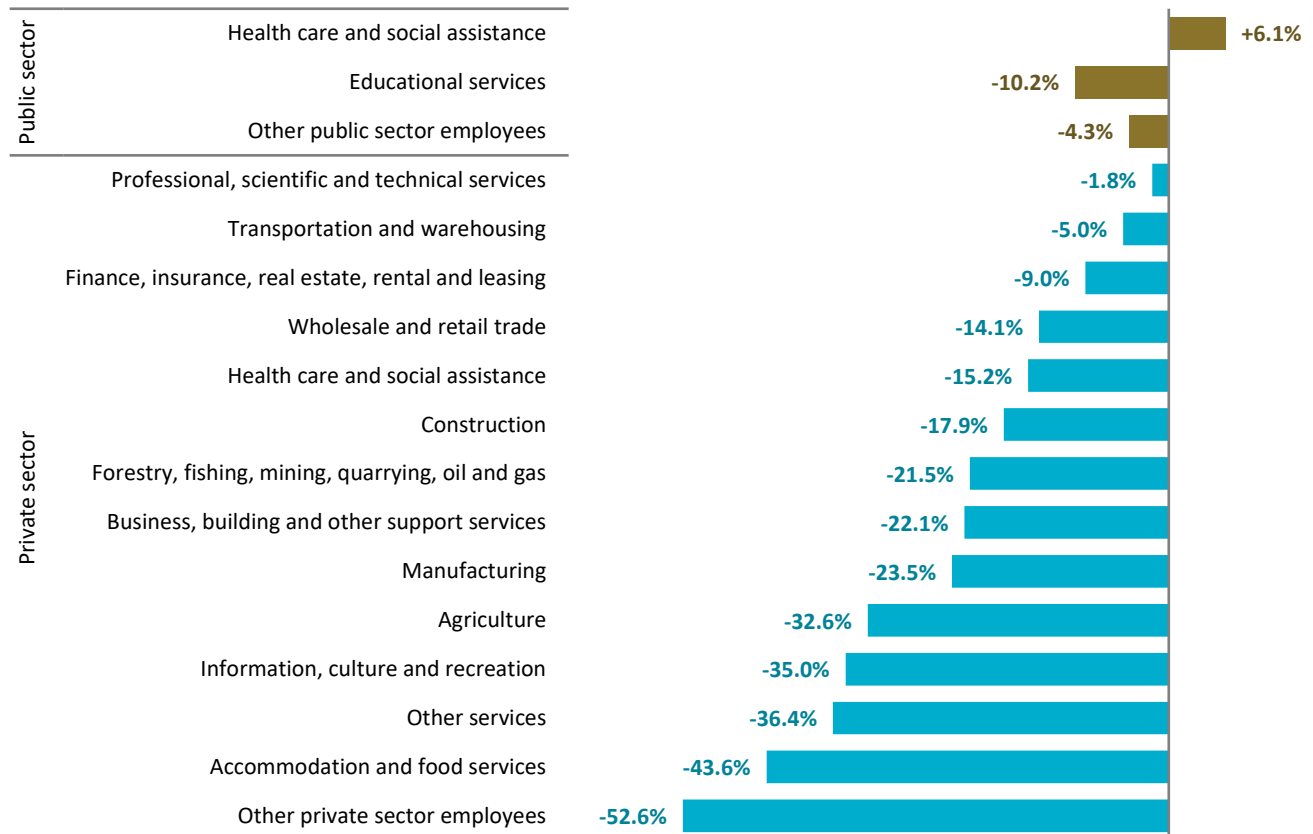
- Tourism-related industries (accommodation and food services, information, culture and recreation, travel, etc.)
- Construction
- Retail trade (with some exceptions such as food retailers, building supplies stores and general merchandise stores)
- Business support services (e.g. call centres)
- Personal and laundry services (e.g. hairdressers)
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture

Since April, many industries have begun to recover, although many still remain vulnerable. A few of the industries that continue to be heavily impacted include:

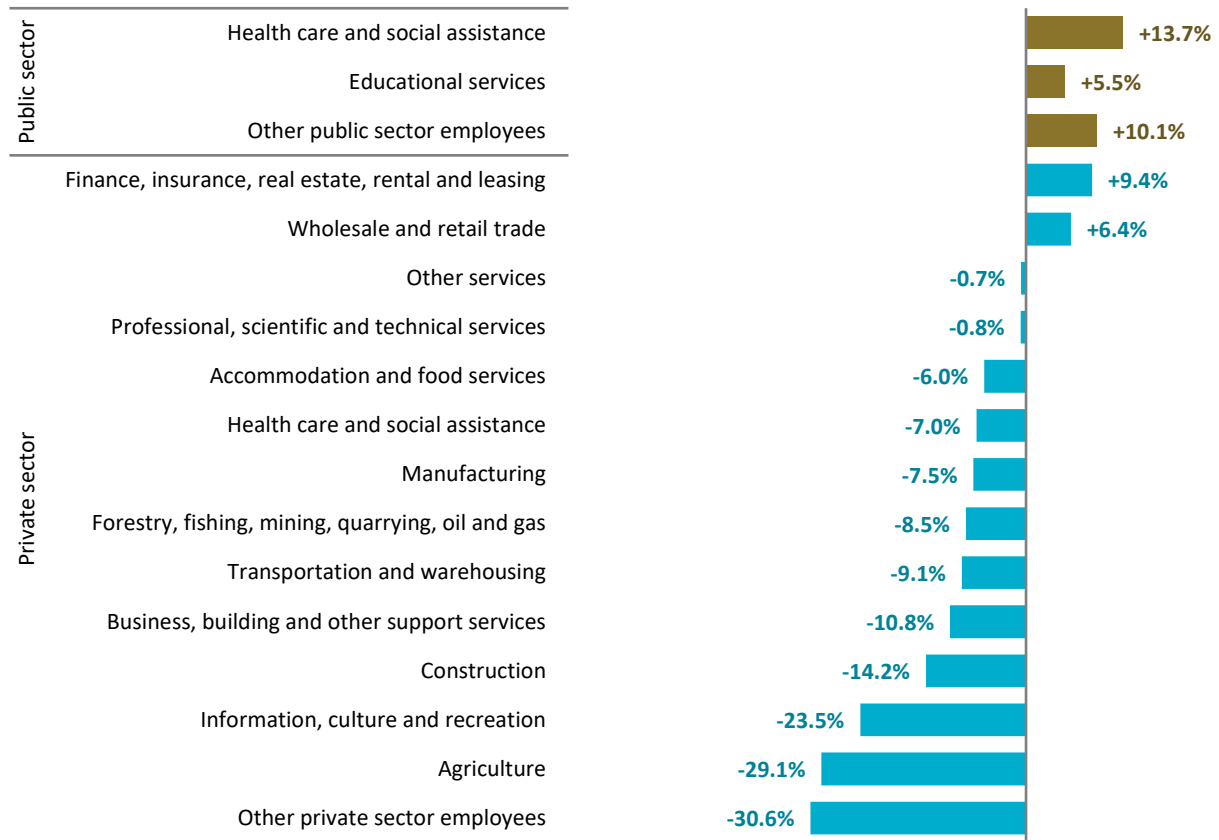
- Tourism-related industries
- Agriculture
- Construction

It's important to note that even among industries that have shown signs of recovery, in many cases, the recovery was not only the result of the easing of restrictions but may have also been due to the introduction of government support programs such as the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). Close to \$1 billion had been paid out to New Brunswick employers (and in turn, employees) through the CEWS as of February 2021. Uptake for the CEWS was particularly high in the accommodation and food services sector.

Year-over-Year Change in Employment Between April 2019 and April 2020 by Sector - New Brunswick



Year-over-Year Change in Employment Between Dec 2019 to Feb 2020 and Dec 2020 to Feb 2021 (3-Month Averages) by Sector - New Brunswick



Wages⁵

Pre-Pandemic Trends

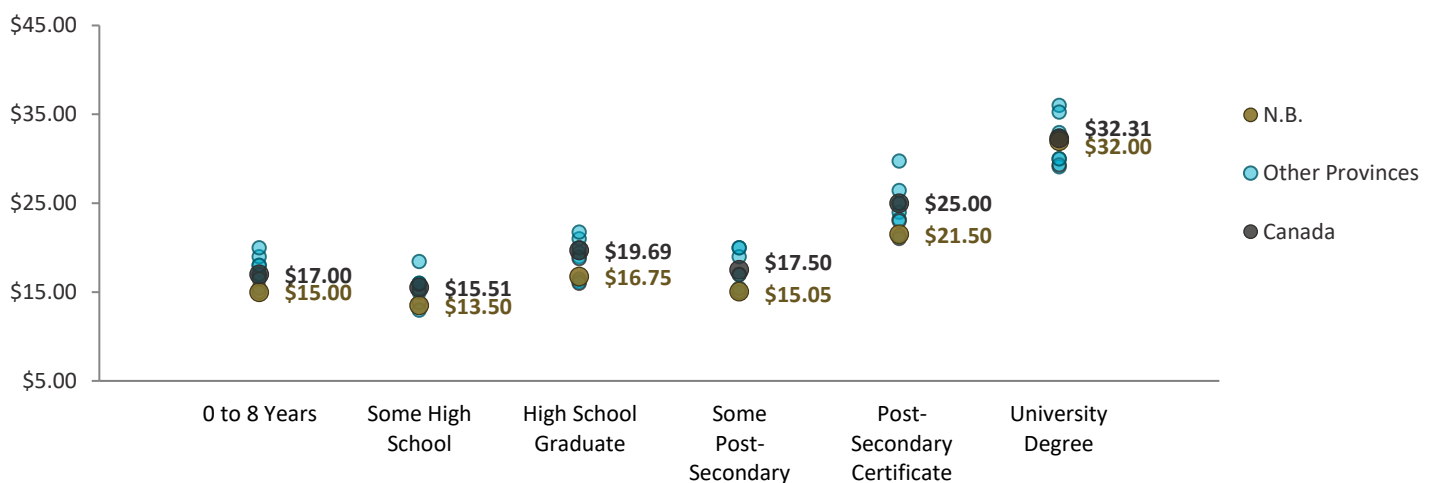
In 2019, the median hourly wage rate among employees in New Brunswick was \$20.18. This represented the third lowest median among the provinces and was well below the national median of \$24.00. While factors such as education and demographics account for some of this gap, even when these factors are controlled for, a noticeable gap persists.

Within the province, males earned noticeably more than females. In 2019, the median hourly wage rate was \$21.00 among males compared to \$19.50 among females. An even larger gap existed at a national level, where these rates were \$25.79 and \$22.00 respectively. This gap is most prominent among lower education levels.

When comparing high-level wage or income statistics such as these, it's important to keep in mind that there are a number of factors that may be having an influence, such as:

- The type of occupations and/or industries that individuals work in
- Education and experience levels
- Factors such as job tenure, part-time/full-time status, and union coverage
- Discrimination (whether it's based on sex, sexual orientation, race, age, religion, parental status, etc.)

Median Hourly Wage Rate Among Employees by Highest Level of Education - 2019



Median Hourly Wage Rate Among Employees by Highest Level of Education – N.B. and Canada – 2019

	New Brunswick		Canada	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0 to 8 Years	\$17.00	\$13.50	\$16.60	\$14.55
Some High School	\$15.20	\$12.25	\$18.00	\$14.50
High School Graduate	\$18.00	\$15.00	\$19.00	\$16.50
Some Post-Secondary	\$17.50	\$14.24	\$20.00	\$18.00
Post-Secondary Certificate	\$23.53	\$20.00	\$25.00	\$20.15
University Degree	\$33.06	\$31.28	\$33.11	\$32.00

⁵ Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Tables 14-10-0301 and 14-10-0340 and Special Data Purchase.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Amidst the pandemic, the median hourly wage rate among employees in New Brunswick increased from \$20.12 to \$21.00 per hour in 2020, a 4.4% increase. This increase was in large part driven by job losses among low wage earners. Furthermore, among employees who managed to keep their jobs (or find new jobs), many were working reduced hours, limiting their total earnings.

One group that did see a substantial increase to their earnings were individuals employed in management occupations. Between 2019 and 2020, the median hourly wage rate of managers increased by 13.8%. At the same time, both employment (+7.6%) and average hours worked (+1.1%) increased among this group.

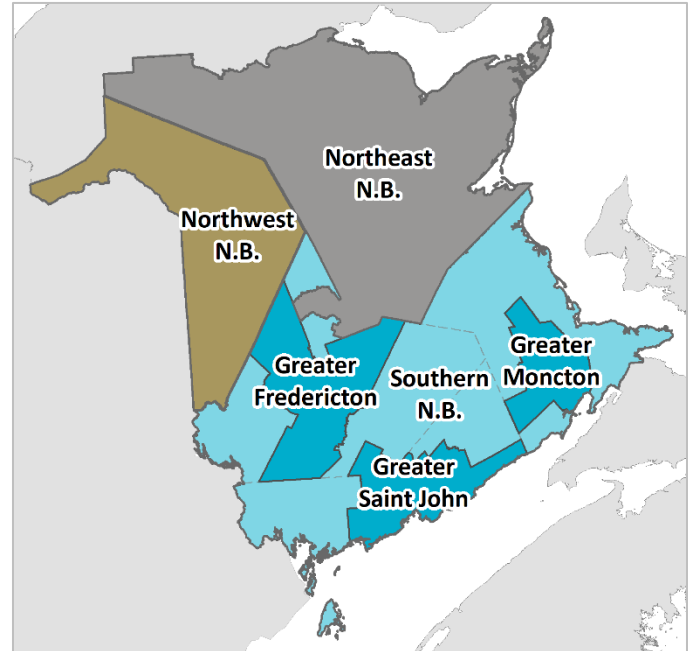
Sub-Provincial⁶

Pre-Pandemic Trends

Labour market conditions in New Brunswick vary significantly by geographic location. While the province's three major centres – Moncton, Saint John and Fredericton – all have relatively low unemployment rates and relatively high participation rates, more rural 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 three largest cities (Moncton, Saint John and Fredericton), a trend that has become more pronounced over time.

Year-over-year, Greater Saint John (+3,000; +4.7%), Greater Fredericton (+2,300; +4.2%), and Greater Moncton (+1,300; +1.6%) all experienced gains in employment, while other parts of southern New Brunswick also saw employment levels increase (+1,700; +2.9%).

In contrast to southern parts of the province, employment declined in the northern regions. Year-over-year, Northeast New Brunswick saw employment decrease by 4,300 (-6.7%), while the Northwest region saw employment decrease by 1,100 (-2.9%).



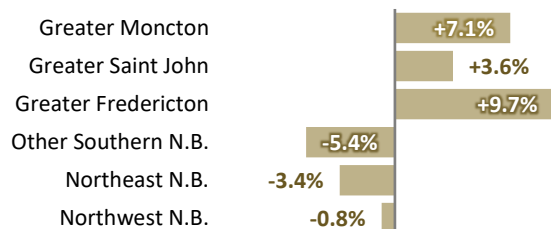
Looking over a slightly longer period, Greater Saint John, Greater Fredericton, and Greater Moncton saw 3.6%, 9.7% and 7.1% employment growth between 2014 and 2019 respectively. On the other hand, southern New Brunswick outside of its three major centres saw employment decline by 5.4% during this time, while the province's Northeast and Northwest regions saw declines of 3.4% and 0.8% respectively.

Greater Fredericton (6.4% to 5.7%) and Greater Moncton (6.0% to 5.7%), both saw their unemployment rates fall year-over-year, while Greater Saint John (6.3% to 6.8%), Northeast N.B. (12.6% to 13.0%) and Northwest N.B. (6.5% to 7.2%) all saw their rates increase.

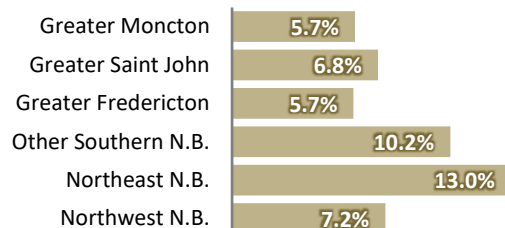
In the longer term, all regions of the province have seen their unemployment rates trend downwards over the past several years, with the Northeast and Northwest seeing the most dramatic decreases, and rural southern parts of the province seeing the least change.

⁶ Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Tables 14-10-0378, 14-10-0385, 14-10-0387 and 14-10-0393.

Employment Growth – Selected Regions – 2014 to 2019



Unemployment Rate – Selected Regions – 2019



COVID-19 Pandemic

Labour Force Statistics – Selected Regions – 2014 to 2019

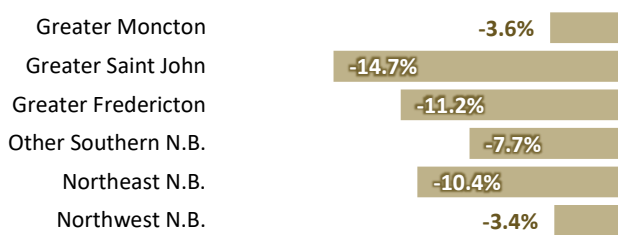
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Greater Moncton						
Employment	75,100	76,600	76,000	75,300	79,100	80,400
Participation rate	66.9%	67.8%	66.7%	64.2%	66.1%	65.8%
Employment rate	62.3%	63.0%	61.7%	60.3%	62.3%	62.0%
Unemployment rate	6.9%	7.0%	7.4%	6.1%	6.0%	5.7%
Greater Saint John						
Employment	64,700	63,900	64,200	66,600	64,000	67,000
Participation rate	65.7%	65.5%	65.3%	65.9%	63.2%	65.9%
Employment rate	60.6%	59.9%	60.1%	62.0%	59.2%	61.4%
Unemployment rate	7.8%	8.3%	8.0%	5.9%	6.1%	6.8%
Greater Fredericton						
Employment	51,500	53,100	54,900	53,100	54,200	56,500
Participation rate	65.7%	66.7%	68.2%	63.6%	64.4%	65.3%
Employment rate	60.4%	61.9%	63.2%	60.1%	60.3%	61.6%
Unemployment rate	8.0%	7.2%	7.3%	5.5%	6.4%	5.7%
Other Southern N.B.⁷						
Employment	64,400	59,900	60,300	61,200	59,200	60,900
Participation rate	62.4%	59.3%	59.1%	59.0%	57.4%	58.7%
Employment rate	56.1%	52.3%	52.5%	53.3%	51.5%	52.8%
Unemployment rate	10.1%	12.1%	11.2%	9.5%	9.9%	10.2%
Northeast N.B.						
Employment	62,200	62,600	60,300	62,800	64,400	60,100
Participation rate	56.4%	55.6%	53.9%	54.8%	55.7%	52.3%
Employment rate	46.7%	47.0%	45.2%	47.3%	48.7%	45.5%
Unemployment rate	17.3%	15.5%	16.0%	13.9%	12.6%	13.0%
Northwest N.B.						
Employment	36,600	37,000	37,800	37,200	37,400	36,300
Participation rate	61.9%	63.0%	62.4%	61.9%	61.8%	60.3%
Employment rate	56.0%	56.8%	58.1%	57.3%	57.8%	56.0%
Unemployment rate	9.6%	9.8%	6.9%	7.5%	6.5%	7.2%

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.

Individuals across all parts of New Brunswick were affected by the pandemic in 2020; however, some regions were affected less than others. In terms of job losses at the onset of the pandemic, estimates suggest that the Greater Saint John area was possibly the hardest hit area in the province, while the Greater Moncton area and the Northwest were arguably the least impacted.

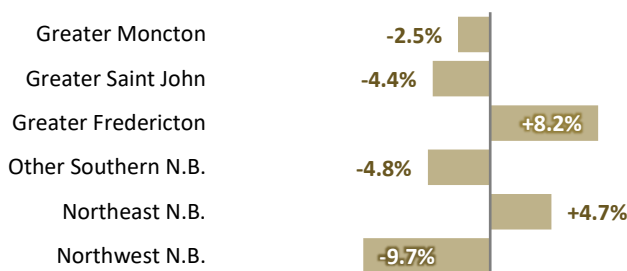
As previously mentioned, while employment estimates may point towards the economy being close to a full recovery, many workers were still working reduced hours and/or were employed in jobs that were only able to exist due to government support programs such as the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy.

Year-over-Year Change in Employment Between Mar-May 2019 and Mar-May 2020 (3-Month Averages) – Selected Regions



Since the initial disruption, most areas of the province have seen a partial recovery. While employment in some parts of the province, such as the Greater Saint John area and the Northwest region, continued to lag behind in early 2021, other areas of the province, particularly the Greater Fredericton area and Northeast region, were seeing employment totals that exceeded pre-pandemic levels.

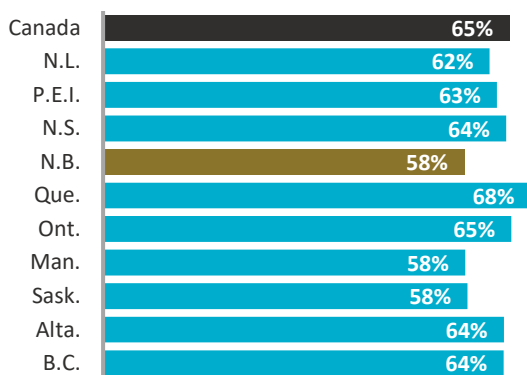
Year-over-Year Change in Employment Between Dec 2019 to Feb 2020 and Dec 2020 to Feb 2021 (3-Month Averages) – Selected Regions



Education⁸

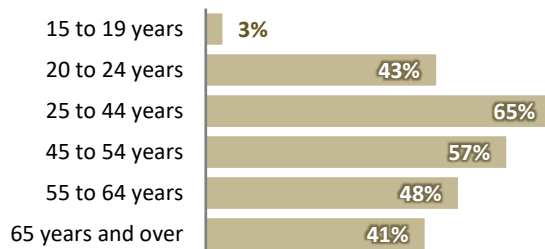
The educational attainment of New Brunswick's population is in part a reflection of the skills demanded by the province's employers, or more broadly, its labour market. In general, compared to the country as a whole, there is somewhat less demand for workers with post-secondary credentials in New Brunswick.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

Post-Secondary Education Completion Rate Among the Population Aged 25 to 64 Years – 2016



At the time of the 2016 Census, 57.6% of New Brunswickers between the ages of 25 and 64 had some form of post-secondary credential, compared to 64.8% at a national level. Among labour force participants in this age range, these percentages were somewhat higher, at 62.1% within New Brunswick, and 68.7% nationally.

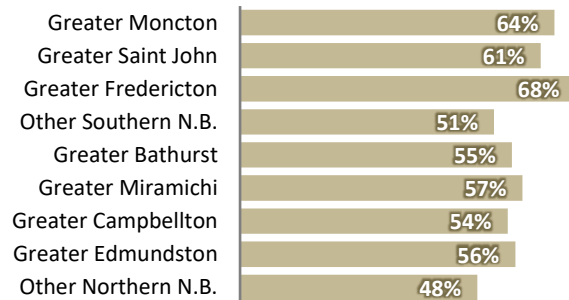
Post-Secondary Education Completion Rate by Age Group – New Brunswick – 2016



Post-secondary educational attainment levels in New Brunswick varied significantly by:

- **Geography:** Only 49.7% of New Brunswickers aged 25 to 64 years who were living in communities outside of the province's seven main cities or their surrounding areas had some form of post-secondary education, compared to 62.2% of those that were living in one of those seven centres or their surrounding areas.
- **Age:** Only 47.5% of New Brunswickers aged 55 to 64 years had completed some form of post-secondary education, compared to 65.1% of individuals aged 25 to 44 years.
- **Sex:** Only 54.4% of male New Brunswickers aged 25 to 64 years had completed some form of post-secondary education, compared to 60.6% of females in this age range. This gap was even larger among younger age groups.

Post-Secondary Education Completion Rate Among Individuals Aged 25 to 64 Years – Selected Regions – 2016



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

⁸ Source(s): Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016197.

Post-Secondary Education Completion Rate by Age Group – N.B. and Canada – 2016

	New Brunswick			Canada		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
15 to 19 years	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%
20 to 24 years	43%	38%	49%	45%	40%	50%
25 to 44 years	65%	59%	71%	70%	66%	74%
45 to 54 years	57%	54%	59%	64%	63%	66%
55 to 64 years	48%	49%	46%	56%	58%	54%
65 years and over	41%	46%	37%	45%	52%	40%

Highest Certificate, Diploma or Degree Among Individuals Aged 25 to 64 – N.B. and Canada – 2016

	New Brunswick			Canada		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
No Certificate, Diploma or Degree	14%	17%	11%	11%	13%	10%
High School or Equivalent	29%	29%	28%	24%	24%	23%
Post-Secondary	58%	54%	61%	65%	63%	67%
Apprenticeship/Trades	9%	14%	6%	11%	15%	7%
College/Non-University Certificate or Diploma	26%	22%	30%	22%	19%	25%
University, Below Bachelor Level	2%	1%	2%	3%	3%	4%
University, Bachelor Level	14%	12%	17%	19%	17%	21%
University, Above Bachelor Level	6%	5%	6%	10%	9%	10%