

New Brunswick Regional Profile  
**Northwest**  
June 2024



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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.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

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.

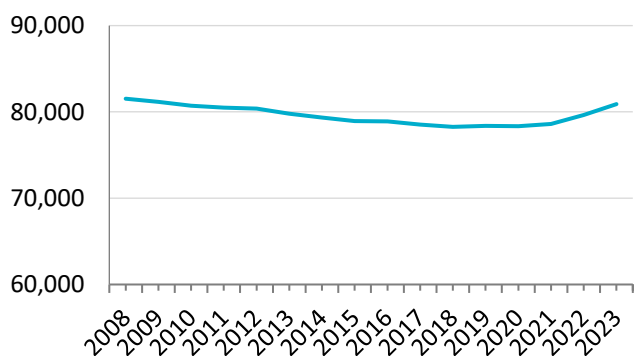
Outside of the city of Edmundston and the towns of Grand Falls and Woodstock, Northwest New Brunswick is a largely rural region. At the time of the 2021 Census, rural areas<sup>2</sup> accounted for 70.1% of the region's population.

## Demographics

### Population Trends<sup>3</sup>

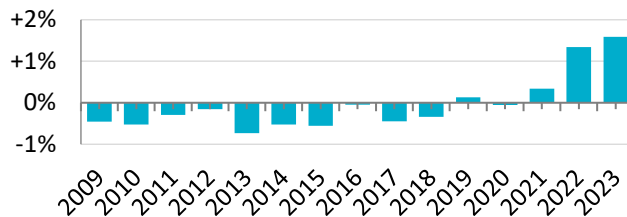
As of July 1, 2023, the population of New Brunswick's Northwest region was estimated to be 80,915 (approximately 9.7% of the province's total population). Between 2008 and 2023, the region's population shrank by 0.8% (from 81,529 to 80,915).

#### Population by Year – Northwest N.B.



This represented the eighth 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. – 2008 to 2023

Region	2008 to 2013	2013 to 2018	2018 to 2023	2008 to 2023
Northeast	-2.5%	-1.2%	+2.7%	-1.2%
Southeast	+4.9%	+4.6%	+15.3%	+26.6%
Southwest	+0.6%	+0.6%	+6.4%	+7.7%
Central	+4.8%	+3.7%	+8.8%	+18.4%
Northwest	-2.1%	-1.9%	+3.4%	-0.8%

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	2008	2013	2018	2023
Edmundston	16,552	16,322	16,796	17,175
Woodstock	5,210	5,323	5,354	6,050
Grand Falls	5,751	5,473	5,222	5,461
Haut-Madawaska	4,018	3,900	3,787	3,884
Other	49,998	48,763	47,108	48,345

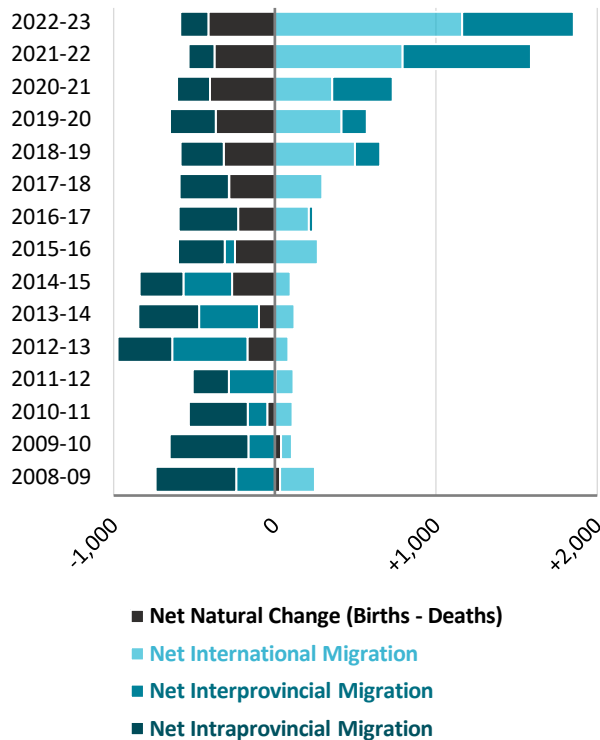
<sup>1</sup> Source(s): Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population (Tables 98-10-0002 and 98-10-0011).

<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

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.



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	Jul 2022 to Jul 2023	Previous 10 Years (Avg.)
<b>Natural Change</b>	<b>-412</b>	<b>-275</b>
Births	617	626
Deaths	1,029	901
<b>Net International Migration</b>	<b>1,161</b>	<b>313</b>
Immigration	743	264
Temporary Residents (Net)	443	84
Emigration (Net)	25	35
<b>Net Interprovincial Migration</b>	<b>693</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Net Intraprovincial Migration<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>-176</b>	<b>-287</b>

<sup>4</sup> '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 2022 to Jul 2023	Previous 10 Years (Avg.)
<b>International (Net)</b>		
0 to 17 years	+302	+89
18 to 24 years	+299	+66
25 to 54 years	+557	+156
55 to 64 years	+16	+2
65 years and over	-13	+0
<b>Interprovincial (Net)</b>		
0 to 17 years	+183	+37
18 to 24 years	-16	-79
25 to 54 years	+252	-4
55 to 64 years	+166	+43
65 years and over	+108	+35
<b>Intraprovincial (Net)</b>		
0 to 17 years	-23	-20
18 to 24 years	-90	-128
25 to 54 years	-62	-115
55 to 64 years	-4	-12
65 years and over	+3	-12

As of July 2023, the Northwest's population had the ninth highest median age (49.1 years) among Canada's seventy-six economic regions. This median was slightly higher among the region's female population (50.0 years) compared to its male population (48.2 years).

### Median Age by Region – N.B. – 2023



## Language<sup>5</sup>

At the time of the 2021 Census, 50.4% of the Northwest New Brunswick population's first official language<sup>6</sup> 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%

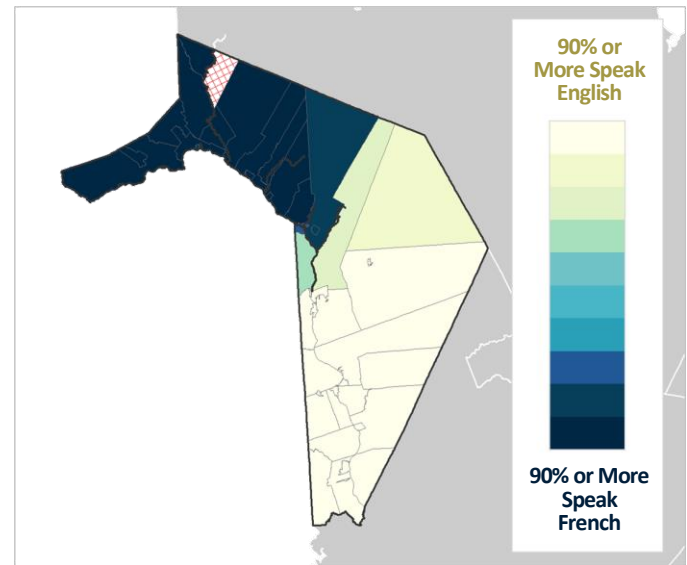
A significant number of individuals in the region were able to speak in both official languages (38.8% of the population).

### 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%

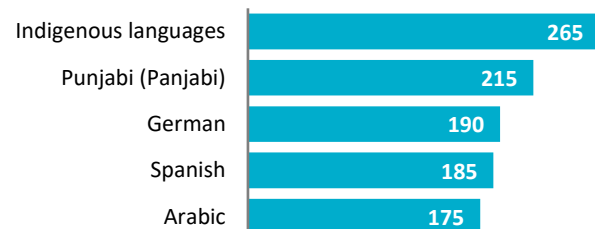
Language capabilities and preferences varied significantly across the region, with the majority of residents in the most southern parts of the region speaking primarily English, and the majority of residents in more northern parts of the region speaking primarily French. These northern communities were 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 Tongues<sup>7</sup> (Excluding English and French) – Northwest N.B. – May 2021



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

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

<sup>7</sup> 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.

## Education<sup>8</sup>

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.

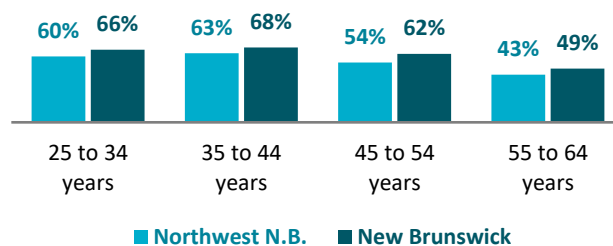
### Highest Level of Education Among the Population Aged 25 to 64 Years – May 2021

	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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>55%</b>

### 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%	<b>72%</b>
Woodstock	65%	54%	<b>65%</b>
Grand Falls	62%	45%	<b>62%</b>
Florenceville-Bristol	69%	68%	<b>69%</b>
Other	57%	44%	<b>57%</b>

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

## Labour Force

### Overview<sup>9</sup>

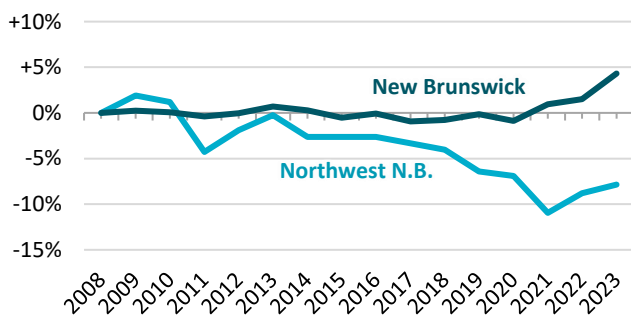
#### Labour Force Characteristics – 2023

	Northwest N.B.	New Brunswick
Population Aged 15+	66,400	683,400
Not in Labour Force	27,700	269,800
Labour Force	38,700	413,600
Employment	36,600	386,500
Unemployment	2,100	27,100
Participation Rate	58.3%	60.5%
Employment Rate	55.1%	56.6%
Unemployment Rate	5.4%	6.6%

Throughout 2023, there were an average of 38,700 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 (+4.3%) and employment (+6.7%) growth in 2023. This growth was driven primarily by an influx of international and interprovincial migrants.

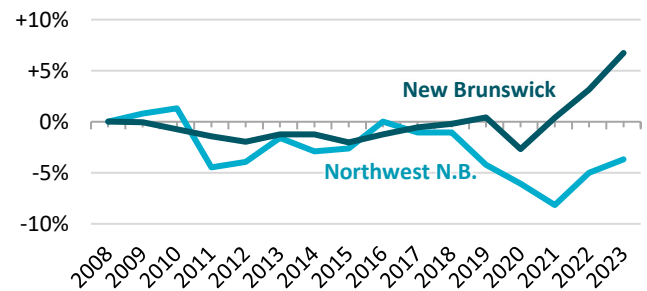
#### Labour Force Growth Relative to 2008



In 2023, only 58.3% of the region's population aged 15 years and over were participating in the labour force, compared to 60.5% at a provincial level, and 65.6% nationally. This seemingly low labour force participation rate was in large part a reflection of the region's

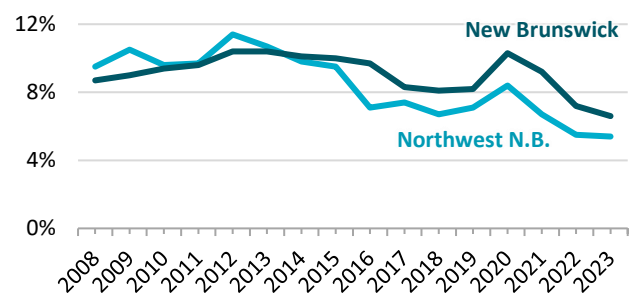
relatively old population (since older individuals are less likely to participate in the labour force). When age is accounted for, the Northwest is much closer to being on par with other parts of country – among the population aged 25 to 54 years, 86.9% of individuals in the region were participating in the labour force, compared to 88.0% at a provincial level, and 88.8% nationally.

#### Employment Growth Relative to 2008



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 2013 and 2023, the Northwest region saw its unemployment rate fall from 10.7% to 5.4%.

#### Unemployment Rate



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

## Industry<sup>10</sup>

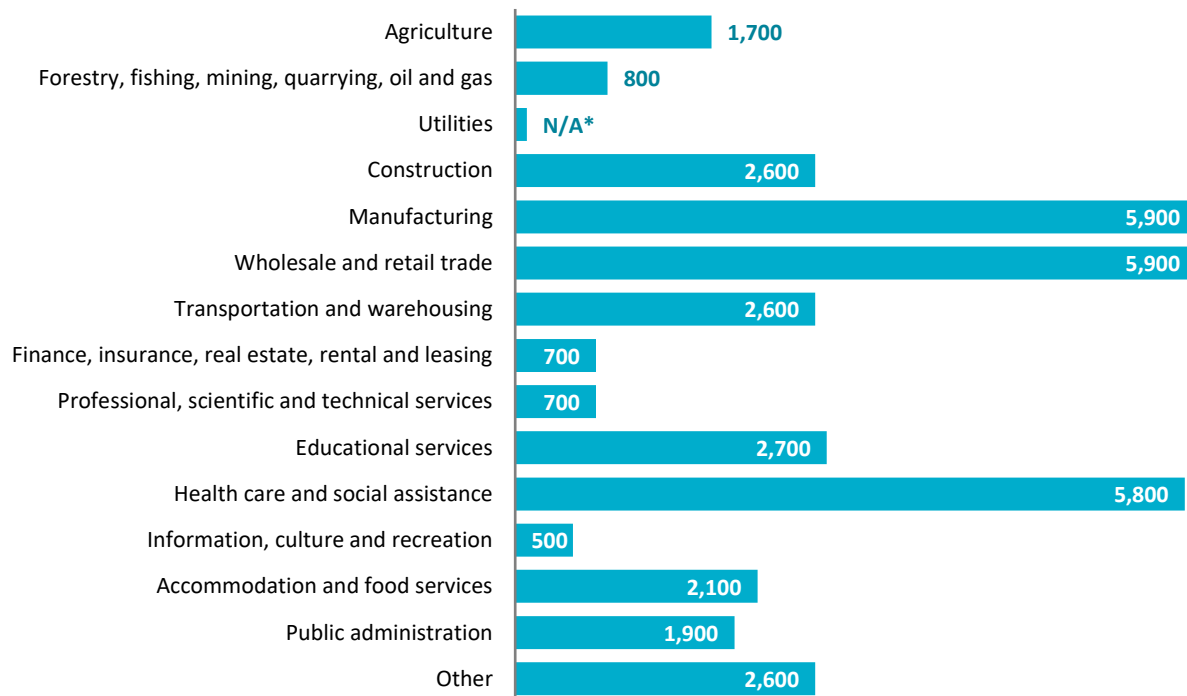
Some of the industries that accounted for a significantly larger share of overall employment in the region compared to the country as a whole included:

- 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 - 2023



\*Suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the Statistics Act

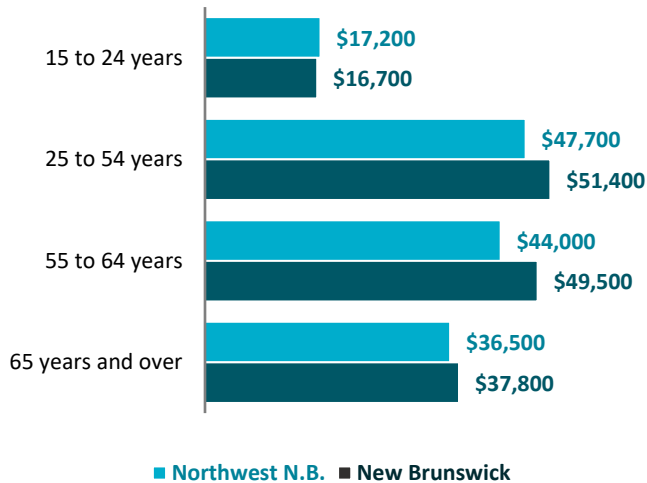
<sup>10</sup> Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (Table 14-10-0392).



## Income<sup>11</sup>

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.

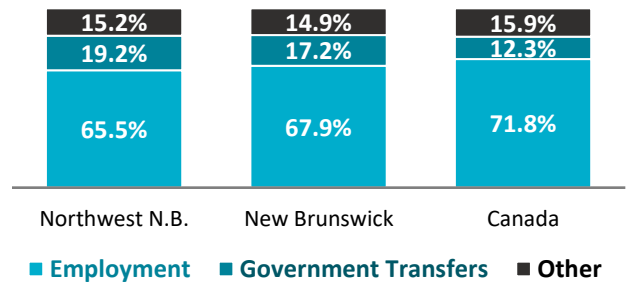
### Average Total Income by Age Group – 2019



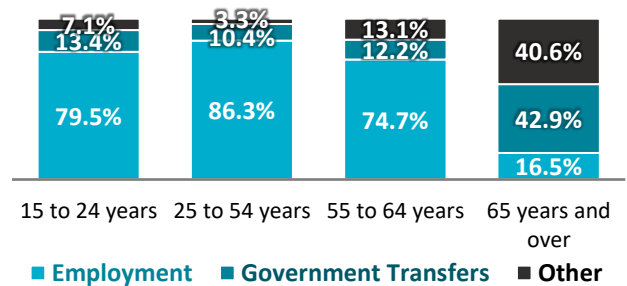
Furthermore, individuals in the Northwest had a relatively high dependence on government transfers. In 2019, government transfers accounted for 19.2% of total aggregate income in the region, compared to 17.2% province-wide, and 12.3% nationally. This gap was driven primarily by two main factors:

- 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

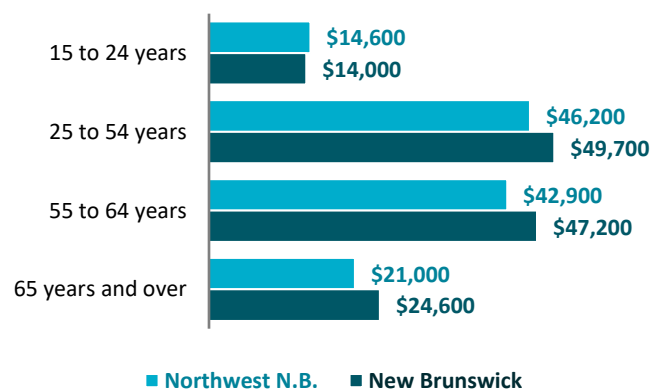


### Sources of Income by Age Group – Northwest N.B. – 2019



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



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

## Appendix: Population by Community<sup>12</sup>

### Population by Community – Northwest New Brunswick

	Population					% Change		
	2008	2013	2018	2022	2023	1-Year	5-Year	15-Year
Edmundston	16,552	16,322	16,796	16,802	17,175	+2.2%	+2.3%	+3.8%
Woodstock	5,210	5,323	5,354	5,897	6,050	+2.6%	+13.0%	+16.1%
Grand Falls / Grand-Sault	5,751	5,473	5,222	5,372	5,461	+1.7%	+4.6%	-5.0%
Haut-Madawaska	4,018	3,900	3,787	3,839	3,884	+1.2%	+2.6%	-3.3%
Saint-André	1,961	1,959	1,832	1,835	1,869	+1.9%	+2.0%	-4.7%
Florenceville-Bristol	1,604	1,640	1,607	1,588	1,636	+3.0%	+1.8%	+2.0%
Perth-Andover	1,811	1,683	1,588	1,612	1,631	+1.2%	+2.7%	-9.9%
Saint-Léonard	1,310	1,346	1,354	1,329	1,339	+0.8%	-1.1%	+2.2%
Plaster Rock	1,145	1,089	1,016	1,066	1,104	+3.6%	+8.7%	-3.6%
Neqotkuk (First Nations)	946	1,043	1,024	1,111	1,075	-3.2%	+5.0%	+13.6%
Hartland	977	958	972	957	986	+3.0%	+1.4%	+0.9%
Sainte-Anne-de-Madawaska	1,049	987	943	904	896	-0.9%	-5.0%	-14.6%
Lac Baker	733	712	694	784	787	+0.4%	+13.4%	+7.4%
Rivière-Verte	783	755	744	745	755	+1.3%	+1.5%	-3.6%
Drummond	815	762	736	746	747	+0.1%	+1.5%	-8.3%
Centreville	537	544	569	521	544	+4.4%	-4.4%	+1.3%
Bath	547	514	498	454	462	+1.8%	-7.2%	-15.5%
Woodstock (First Nations)	368	343	388	450	458	+1.8%	+18.0%	+24.5%
St. Basile (First Nations)	186	209	284	380	387	+1.8%	+36.3%	+108.1%
Aroostook	336	357	310	314	329	+4.8%	+6.1%	-2.1%
Other <sup>13</sup>	34,890	33,862	32,549	32,943	33,340	+1.2%	+2.4%	-4.4%

<sup>12</sup> Source(s): Statistics Canada, Annual Demographic Estimates (Table 17-10-0155).

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