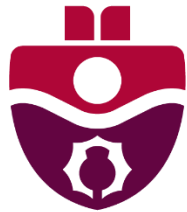


TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF IMMIGRATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK

By

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SOME DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

- After years of decline, the natural increase in population turned negative by 2020.
- Since 2010, New Brunswick has shifted from losing more people to other provinces than it gained, to experiencing a net inflow. By 2024 net interprovincial migration accounted for almost 13 percent of population growth.
- In 2024 immigrants (foreign-born who are granted permanent resident status) accounted for about 55 percent of population growth. When temporary residents are not included in population growth, immigrants' contribution rises to 86 percent.
- Population growth in New Brunswick is highly vulnerable to changes in federal immigration policy. **Policy implication:** There is a strong need for the province to remain actively engaged in future immigration target planning of the federal government and allocations under various immigration programs.

IMMIGRATION TRENDS

- New Brunswick overtook Nova Scotia as the top destination of immigrants to Atlantic Canada, largely due to its early take-up of the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP).
- The number of immigrants residing in New Brunswick almost doubled between 2001 and 2021, rising from 22,465 to 44,125. In 2021, this represented 5.8 percent of the population.
- Most immigrants came as economic class immigrants, the number of which has increased fivefold in the past decade.
- The majority of economic immigrants entered under the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP). Over half of all economic immigrants came under the PNP. The number of AIP entrants almost doubled from 2023 to 2024.
- Since 2001, most of the recent immigrants age 15 and over have been in the 25-44 age group, including two-thirds of those arriving 2016-2020. The number of non-immigrants in this age group have been consistently falling. Immigration helps rebalance the population age distribution.
- The source country mix of immigrants has changed since 2000. The traditional source countries of the USA and the UK have gradually dropped off the top five list due to faster growth of immigrants from other sources.

- China ranked first or second until 2021-2024. The Philippines has been in the list since 2011-16. India took the top spot in 2021-2024.
- Cameroon and Morocco have also become leading source countries, reflecting federal and provincial initiatives to increase French speaking immigrants outside of Quebec. In fact, about 56 percent of the 2,360 French speaking immigrants who settled outside of Quebec in 2025, settled in New Brunswick. Nigeria also became a leading source in 2021-24.
- In 2021 almost two-thirds of all immigrants and 80 percent of recent immigrants (those arriving within 5 years of the census year) lived in the census divisions that included Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John. The concentration of immigrants in urban areas appears to be increasing, with 40 percent of recent immigrants settling in Westmorland County (Moncton).
- Only 47 percent of immigrants who arrived in 2012 were still in the province five years later, dropping to 37 percent ten years later. Five-year retention rates improved somewhat for the 2017 arrivals (52 percent) but are lower than neighbouring NS. Some other scholars have found that immigrants with pre-admission experience and those with university degree have higher retention rates.
- Economic class and refugee immigrants are more mobile than family class. Retention rates are higher for family class immigrants.
- **Policy implications:** 1) To achieve both economic and long-term population sustainability goals of immigration policy, smaller provinces like New Brunswick must strike a balance between the primary individual/worker-focused immigration and family immigration. Family class immigrants have higher retention rates, however this class has not been prioritized in recent policy. One option is to prioritize applicants with young families in the worker-focused programs to help achieve both economic and population sustainability goals. 2) Settlement services should be responsive to the needs of diverse newcomer populations.

IMMIGRANTS IN THE LABOUR FORCE

- Since 2007 immigrants have accounted for the vast majority of labour force growth, offsetting what would have been a decline in the 2012-2016 period.
- In the most recent period of strong economic growth immigrants accounted for 27 percent of labour force growth.

Urban and rural labour markets

- The growth of recent immigrants in the labour force in urban areas is particularly pronounced. In 2024 recent immigrants accounted for 70 percent of labour force growth in population centres (defined by Statistics Canada as having a population of at least 1,000 and a population density of 400 persons or more per square kilometre). As of 2024, in population centres, females make up nearly half of the labour force within immigrant, recent immigrant and non-immigrant groups.
- The rural labour force has also benefited from immigration, with the immigrant share of the labour force in rural areas rising to over 4 percent (compared to 21 percent in population centres). Women make up a higher share of the immigrant and recent immigrant labour force groups in rural areas, while males dominate the non-immigrant labour force.
- Immigrants have higher unemployment rates than non-immigrants in the population centres but not in rural areas. Provincial unemployment rates are higher for immigrant females than males, while the opposite is true for the non-immigrant labour force.

Education, Occupation, Industry

- Immigrants are more highly educated than non-immigrants. For the past 25 years, the percentage of recent immigrants with high school or less education has been less than non-immigrants and has been falling. The percentage with university degrees, however, has been rising and is consistently higher than non-immigrants. The gap in education between recent immigrants and non-immigrants has widened over this century.
- In 2024, the percentage of recent immigrants and non-immigrants working in professional and managerial occupations are about equal, at 25 percent.
- In 2024 a higher percentage of recent immigrants (34 percent) find themselves in the lowest skilled job categories compared to the non-immigrant group (30 percent), despite their higher level of education.
- The main industry category for both immigrants and non-immigrants is healthcare and social assistance.
- Immigrants are overrepresented in Accommodation and Food Services, Finance and Insurance, and in Professional, Scientific, and Technical Service industries. Immigrants are underrepresented in industries such as public administration, construction, retail and wholesale trade, primary industries and cultural industries.

Participation rates and unemployment

- Immigrants overall have higher labour participation rates than non-immigrants since 2021, while recent immigrants have had the highest rates since the turn of this century. This reflects aging of the non-immigrant population and the move toward more employment-driven immigration policy in recent years.
- In 2024 both male and female participation rates were higher in the immigrant groups than in the non-immigrant population. This difference was most dramatic for recent immigrants compared to non-immigrants.
- Overall, the immigrant population had lower unemployment rates than non-immigrants until 2024, however a gender breakdown shows this was true only for males, as female unemployment rates were mostly higher for immigrants. Recent immigrants have mostly had higher unemployment rates than either non-immigrants or the immigrant labour force as a whole. This gap is most pronounced for female recent immigrants. It is unclear why unemployment rates have deteriorated for immigrants compared to non-immigrants. As noted above, this is primarily an issue in the population centres.

Earnings

- Earnings of immigrants relative to non-immigrants have also deteriorated, especially for recent immigrants. This may reflect the shift in source countries to ones which offer education and labour market training that are different from Canadian labour market requirements. Language, cultural, and racial barriers may also contribute to the deterioration of earnings outcomes. In 2024, a recent immigrant earned about 82 percent of what a non-immigrant earned, while all immigrants earned 97 percent.
- Among Economic immigrants, Canadian Experience Class admissions earn the highest. This finding provides support for the emphasis on Canadian experience in recent economic immigration programs. In general, earnings increase with time in the province, as would be expected.
- **Policy implications:** Alignment of federal and provincial programs with provincial labour market needs is essential. IRCC conducted an evaluation of Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program in 2020, covering the period 2019-20. The study showed positive program outcomes. Given that the program has now matured, further research on this topic and to determine what kinds of barriers exist for immigrants' integration is needed. The same applies to evaluation of PNP which was last done in 2017. The causes of gender differences in unemployment must also be studied.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- The number of international students entering New Brunswick annually was about 2,000 prior to 2010 and more than doubled by 2019. This helped post-secondary institutions adjust to declining domestic enrollments which is a consequence of a drop in the university-aged population. Following a dip during COVID, numbers increased to almost 11,000 by 2023. The federal cap on their entries brought their number down by approximately one quarter to just over 8,000 in 2024, creating challenges for the post-secondary sector. Top five source countries in 2024 included India, Nigeria, Algeria, Philippines and Cameroon.
- Median earnings of former international students who transitioned to work permit or permanent resident status and resided in New Brunswick have been generally low in their first five years, below \$20,000 with the exception of the 2017 cohort. While earnings of former international students improve over time, they remain below median earnings in New Brunswick.
- **Policy implications:** Policies related to international students clearly need to be revisited to create stability for the institutions and to enhance the quality of the education and work experience afforded students and graduates. As the findings for Canadian Experience Class immigrants attest, international students can be an important source for New Brunswick to grow its population and its labour force. Future research should also investigate if international students with higher income potential left the province after completing their studies.

I. INTRODUCTION

From 2000 to 2010 New Brunswick experienced falling natural growth in its population (number of births minus number of deaths), and by 2020 the natural increase in population became negative. Until recently the province was also a net loser of population through interprovincial migration. Population growth is necessary for New Brunswick's economic growth, provincial tax revenue, economic infrastructure, workforce enhancement and achieving economies of scale. Population growth is also necessary to maintain the province's representation in the Canadian House of Commons, relative to other provinces.

It is not surprising, therefore, that at the turn of present century, the provincial government began to recognize the need to boost immigration which has now become the main driver of population growth in the province. Immigration remains under federal jurisdiction, but the province now actively participates in determination of federal immigration levels and programs. The current federal limits on immigration will have disproportionately large impacts on the province because of its reliance on immigration to offset the demographic shortfall. Our primary focus in this research is on the role of immigration in promoting economic growth and development in the region.

Objectives of the study

To understand the role of immigration in shaping the demographics and economy of New Brunswick we:

- Collected and tabulated data on immigration to New Brunswick for the period 2001 - 2024, with a focus on economic objectives of immigration
- Provide a descriptive analysis of the data to understand the demographic and geographic dimensions of immigration to New Brunswick as they relate to the economic objectives of immigration
- Identify some gaps in research that can provide necessary information for an informed public policy discussion on immigration and to implement immigrant attraction, integration and retention strategies in the province

Methodology

The term "immigrant" is used in this study to refer to all foreign-born individuals who are permanent residents of Canada, except those born to Canadian citizens residing abroad. Those whose admission years are within five years of a survey are viewed as recent immigrants. The primary data sources for this study were:

- Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC):

- Statistics Canada

Some data used in this study were obtained from the web sites of the above government sources. However, much of the required data were not available in the public domain and had to be acquired through different channels. Some data were made available to the authors under the specific data sharing agreements of the Atlantic Research Group on Economics of Immigration, Aging and Diversity (ARGEIAD) with IRCC. Some Statistics Canada data were accessed through their online resources, and some were purchased as customized requests.

While we acquired most required data through different channels, we could not obtain all, due partly to the unavailability of some provincial data and partly to the confidentiality constraints that apply to cases where there are insufficient observations.

The analysis we conducted is based primarily on descriptive tools. A distinction was made between immigrants destined for the province and those who stayed in the province. Among those who stayed, separate data were also analyzed for recent immigrants, i.e., those who arrived within five years before a population census or labour force survey, when possible. Most parts of the analysis also used data on the non-immigrant population to facilitate comparisons with non-immigrants.

The analysis focuses on permanent residents who are selected through federal and provincial immigration programs such as Canadian Experience Class, Federal Skilled Workers, Provincial Nominee Program, Atlantic Immigration Program, etc. They are targeted by regional retention policies and are expected to stay long-term.

The period of analysis of this study is 2001-2024. The IRCC data are based on the landing documents of immigrants and are for immigrant inflows. These are available for the entire period of analysis. Statistics Canada data are for the resident population. Some of these are drawn from the population census conducted every five years and are from 2001 until 2021. The data pertaining to resident labour forces of immigrants and non-immigrants are based on Labour Force Surveys (LFS) that are conducted monthly by Statistics Canada. The LFS introduced questions on immigrant status of population starting 2006 and, at the time of writing this report, LFS data were available on an annual basis until 2024. Finally, some data are also based on the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) of Statistics Canada.

The report is organized as follows. Section II reviews some demographic trends in the province of New Brunswick over the current century, highlighting the importance immigration occupies in its population growth. Section III presents some trends in immigration inflows to the province, their entry classes, settlement patterns and source countries mixes. Section IV reviews the statistical profile of immigrants in the province's labour force and compares them with non-immigrants. Their contributions to labour force growth, industrial and occupational breakdown, and labour market indicators are reviewed based on data extracted from Labour Force Surveys. Section V analyzes the trends in the international student population of New Brunswick because it represents a potential pool of highly skilled immigrants in the province. Section VI provides

conclusions, some policy implications of the statistical review and some directions for future research.

II. SOME DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN NEW BRUNSWICK AND THEIR POTENTIAL ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

-
- *In 2001, the population of New Brunswick grew by only 168 people. In 2024, the population grew by more than 22,165, largely because of immigration of permanent and temporary residents from abroad.*
 - *The natural increase in population turned negative by 2020.*
 - *Since 2010, New Brunswick has shifted from losing more people to other provinces than it gained, to gaining more people from other provinces than it lost to them. By 2024, net interprovincial migration accounted for almost 13 percent of population growth.*
 - *Given recent changes to federal policies limiting the numbers of international students, temporary foreign workers and permanent residents, the rate of population growth is likely going to slow down.*
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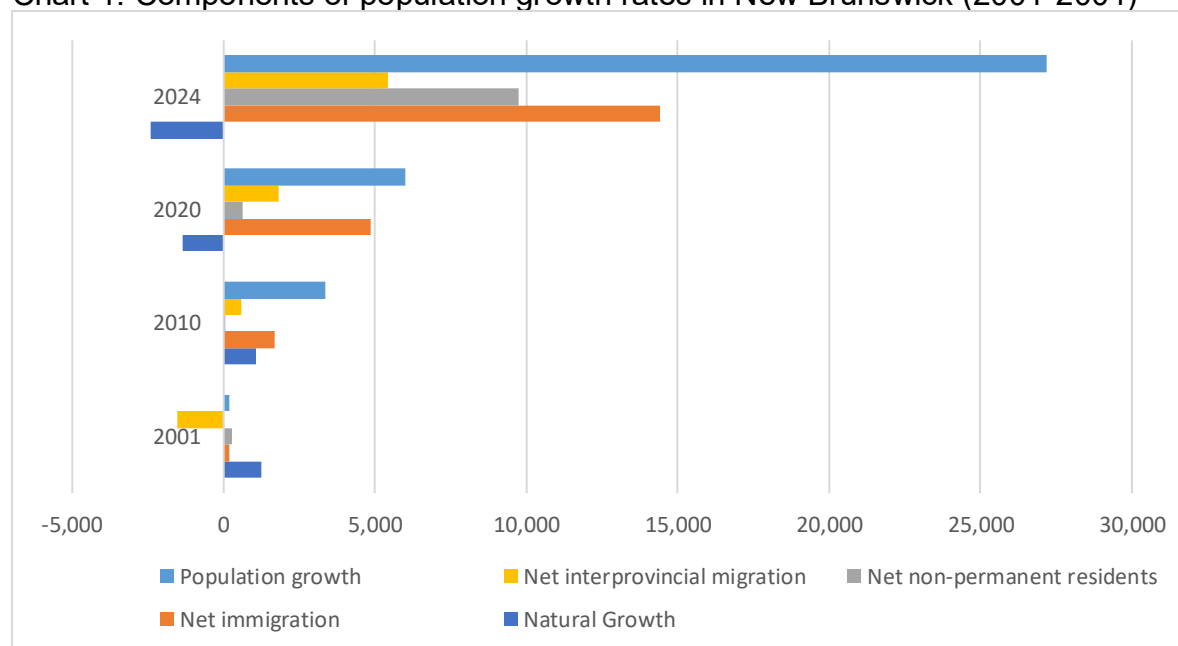
Following a period of modest population growth from 1981-1991, the population in New Brunswick decreased, with a decline of 1.4 percent from 1996-2001 (Akbari, et al 2007 report)¹. Since 2001, however, as Chart 1 shows, the population has grown, particularly since 2020. In 2024 it increased by 27,190 people. Natural growth (births minus deaths), however turned negative by 2020. This was partially offset by a reversal of outmigration to other provinces. In 2024 New Brunswick gained over 5,419 more residents from other provinces than it lost to them. However, the main drivers of the positive population growth in the past fifteen years have been non-permanent residents (mainly international students and temporary foreign workers) and net immigration (permanent residents). This trend was not confined to the Covid-19 pandemic but continued through 2024. As Table 1 shows, 55.1 percent of net population growth in 2024 was due to international migrants who were granted permanent residence status. If non-permanent residents are not included in population growth, their contribution rises to about 86 percent (14,975 as a percentage of 17,446).² Given recent changes to federal policies that limit the numbers of permanent residents, international students

¹ Akbari, A.H., S. Lynch, T. McDonald and W. Rankaduwa. 2007. Socioeconomic and Demographic Profiles of Immigrants in New Brunswick (<https://www.coursehero.com/file/189727151/NB-Report-Final-Decpdf/>)

² For a more detailed perspective on NB's demographic situation: Passaris, Constantine E. (2012). "New Brunswick's Perfect Demographic Storm", Journal of New Brunswick Studies, Issue 3, <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/JNBS/article/view/20080/0> .

and temporary foreign workers admitted, this trend cannot be expected to persist. This will create challenges for population and economic growth and for maintaining public services.³

Chart 1: Components of population growth rates in New Brunswick (2001-2004)



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0008-01 Estimates of the components of demographic growth, annual.

Table 1: Detailed components of population growth in New Brunswick, 2024

Component	Number
Births (1)	6,338
Deaths (2)	8,738
Immigration (3)	14,975
Emigration (4)	885
Net temporary emigration (5)	---
Returning emigrants (6)	337
Net non-permanent residents (7)	9,744
Net interprovincial migration (8)	5,419
Population Growth (9) = (1) - (2) + (3) - (4) - (5) + (6) + (7) + (8)	27,190
Immigrants in population growth % = (3) of (9)	55.1
Net immigration in population growth % = (3-4) of 9	51.8

Source: - Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0008-01 Estimates of the components of demographic growth, annual.

*Shows data not available for a specific reference period.

³ Recognizing these challenges the province negotiated with the federal government to secure additional immigration quota (<https://negma.ca/blogs/news/new-brunswick-secures-additional-immigration-quotas-despite-overall-reductions>).

III. AN OVERVIEW OF IMMIGRATION TRENDS IN NEW BRUNSWICK

Table 2 presents data on resident population by immigrant status for census years with five-year intervals between 2001 and 2021. The number of immigrants residing in New Brunswick almost doubled between 2001 and 2021, rising to 44,125 in 2021. This represents 5.8 percent of the population (compared to 3.2 percent in 2001). However, this is still low compared to the Canadian average in 2021 of 23 percent (Statistics Canada 2021a). Note from Table 2 that the non-immigrant population has been up and down since 2001, ending the period at the same level as in 2011.

As indicated in Chart 2, immigration to the region accelerated during the pandemic, especially in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. In 2024 New Brunswick overtook Nova Scotia as the Atlantic province with the most permanent residents admitted (Chart 2). This may be because New Brunswick was the earliest and most intensive adopter of the federal Atlantic Immigration Pilot when it launched in 2017 (now the permanent Atlantic Immigration Program, since 2022). The province designated a larger number of employers more quickly than Nova Scotia and actively recruited overseas.⁴ More recent data, as revealed in the IRCC's dashboard, indicate that out of the 2,360 Francophone immigrants settling outside of Quebec in 2025, there were 1,315 who settled in New Brunswick through provincial and territorial nominee programs. This appears to reflect the IRCC's recent focus on encouraging the settlement of more Francophone immigrants outside of the province of Quebec. Several pathways exist for their admissions.⁵

Table 2: Immigrant Status of Population in New Brunswick, 2001-2021

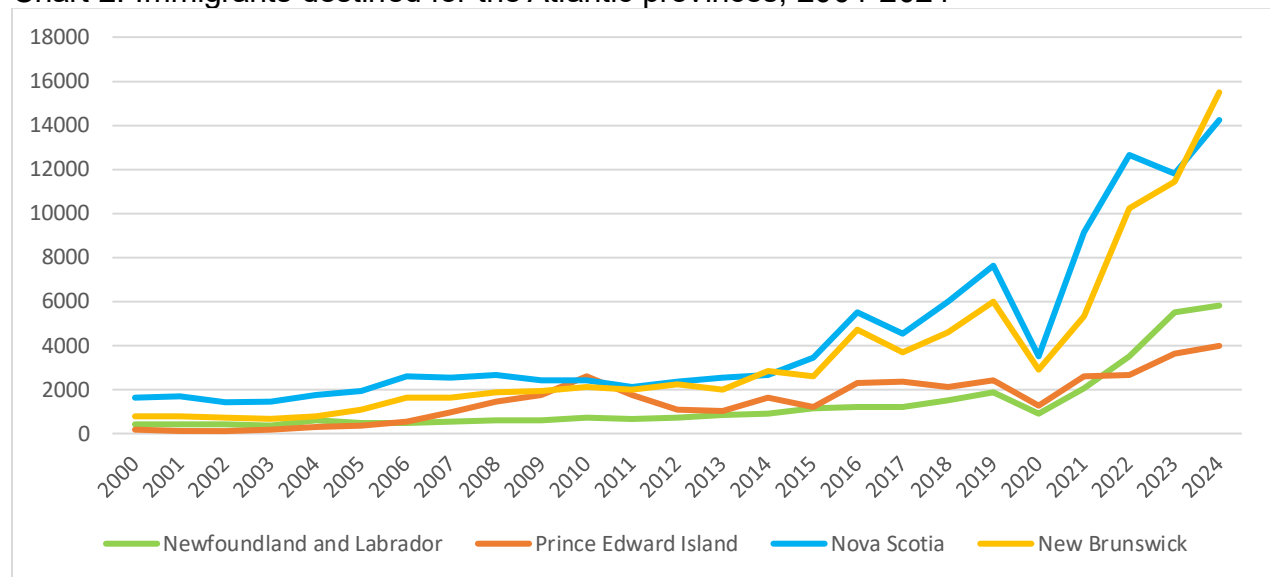
Year	Total Population	Non-Immigrants	Immigrants	Immigrants in total population
2001	719,710	695,560	22,465	3.2%
2006	719,650	690,690	26,400	3.7%
2011	735,835	704,235	28,465	3.9%
2016	730,705	692,535	33,810	4.6%
2021	759,195	704,220	44,125	5.8%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021 Data tables

⁴ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/new-brunswick-population-growth-immigration-1.5305230>. As of December 2019, 5,590 AIP newcomers arrived to the Atlantic Provinces, with 45% of AIP newcomers destined to New Brunswick, 34% to Nova Scotia, 10% to Prince Edward Island, and 10% to Newfoundland and Labrador.
(https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/documents/pdf/english/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/E2-2019_AIP_Accessible_Eng.pdf)

⁵ https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/francophone-immigration-outside-quebec.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Chart 2: Immigrants destined for the Atlantic provinces, 2001-2024



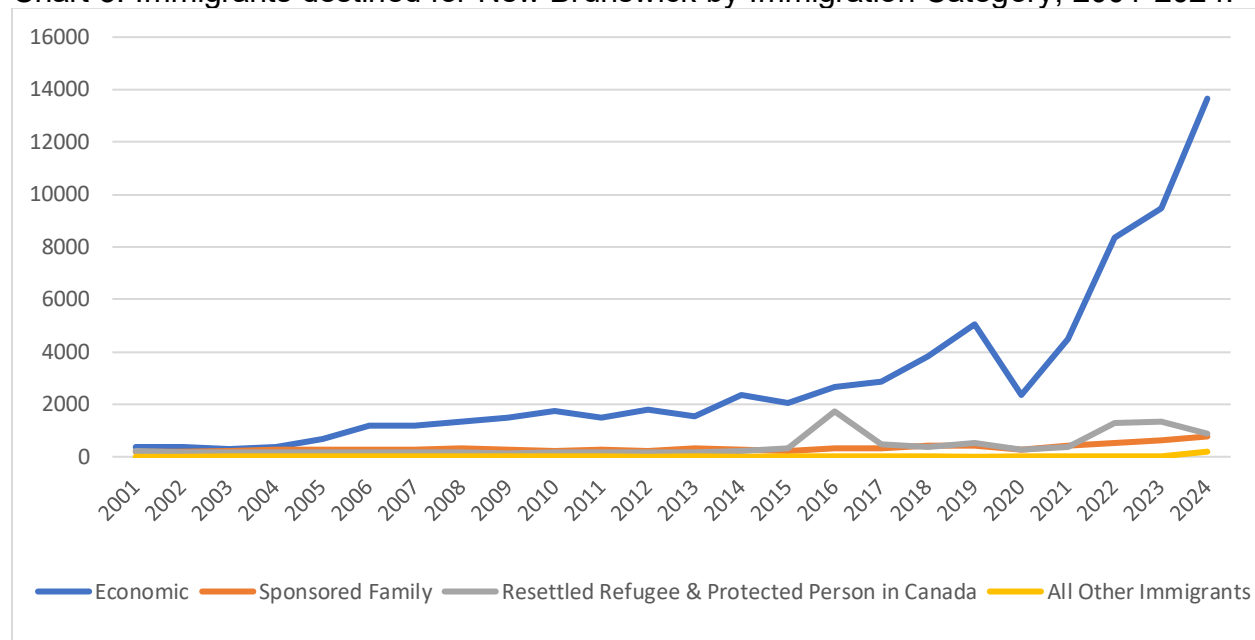
Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)-Custom Data-Canada - Admissions of Permanent Residents by Province/Territory of Intended Destination and Immigration Category.

The composition of immigrants by entry class

- *Most immigrants came as economic class immigrants, the number of which has increased fivefold in the past decade.*
- *Majority of economic immigrants entered under the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and, since 2017, the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP).*
- *Over half of all economic immigrants came under the PNP. The number of AIP entrants almost doubled from 2023 to 2024.*

Most permanent residents come through programs that fall into one of three broad streams: Economic, Sponsored Family, and Resettled Refugees & Protected Persons. Labour market-related programs select people who are expected to make valuable contributions to the Canadian economy. Sponsored Family immigrants are individuals who are admitted facilitating family reunification. Resettled Refugees & Protected Persons are admitted primarily for humanitarian reasons rather than on their expected speed of labour market integration or immediate financial self-sufficiency after arrival. As Chart 3 shows, most permanent residents come through the economic stream. While this has been true throughout the century, it is particularly pronounced since 2020. The number of permanent residents admitted to New Brunswick through economic programs was 13,655 in 2024 compared to 2,375 a decade earlier - almost a five-fold increase. There were also bumps in Resettled Refugees in 2016 and 2022, reflecting the crises in Syria and Ukraine respectively.

Chart 3: Immigrants destined for New Brunswick by Immigration Category, 2001-2024.

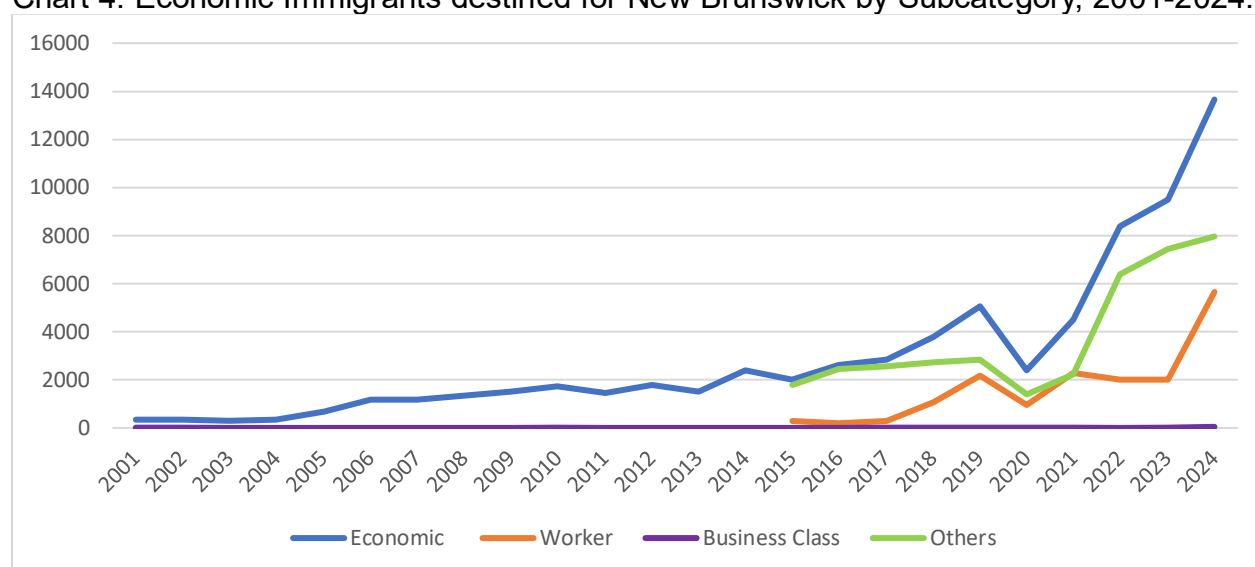


Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)- Canada - Admissions of Permanent Residents by Province/Territory of Intended Destination and Immigration Category.

Note: The definition of Immigration category is according to [Statistics Canada Classification of admission category](#).

Economic immigrants come through a variety of programs. Charts 4 and 5 distinguish immigrants by the program through which they were admitted. Most programs target workers based on their human capital, such as the Federal Skilled Workers program. To qualify, a candidate must have suitable education, work experience, age and language ability in English or French. Qualified candidates are selected under the Express Entry Immigration system to apply for permanent residence. Business Class programs are meant to attract entrepreneurs. 'Other' economic categories in Chart 4 include the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP) and the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) both of which are delivered through federal-provincial partnerships, although there is much stronger provincial control in the case of PNP. Provincial nominees are admitted after being nominated by the province in which they intend on residing (Government of Canada, 2025d). To be admitted through the Atlantic Immigration Program, an immigrant must be either a skilled worker or a recent graduate from a Canadian post-secondary institution. They must also have a job offer from an employer based in one of the four Atlantic Provinces (Government of Canada 2025c). These 'Other' programs have been the dominant source of economic migrants in New Brunswick since 2015 (Chart 4). As shown in Chart 5, the PNP and the AIP admitted similar numbers in 2021, but by 2024 the PNP admitted two and one-half times as many immigrants as the AIP and accounted for fifty percent of economic migrants destined for New Brunswick. These two programs are targeted to the needs of the region and the province and have taken the lead in the economic category.

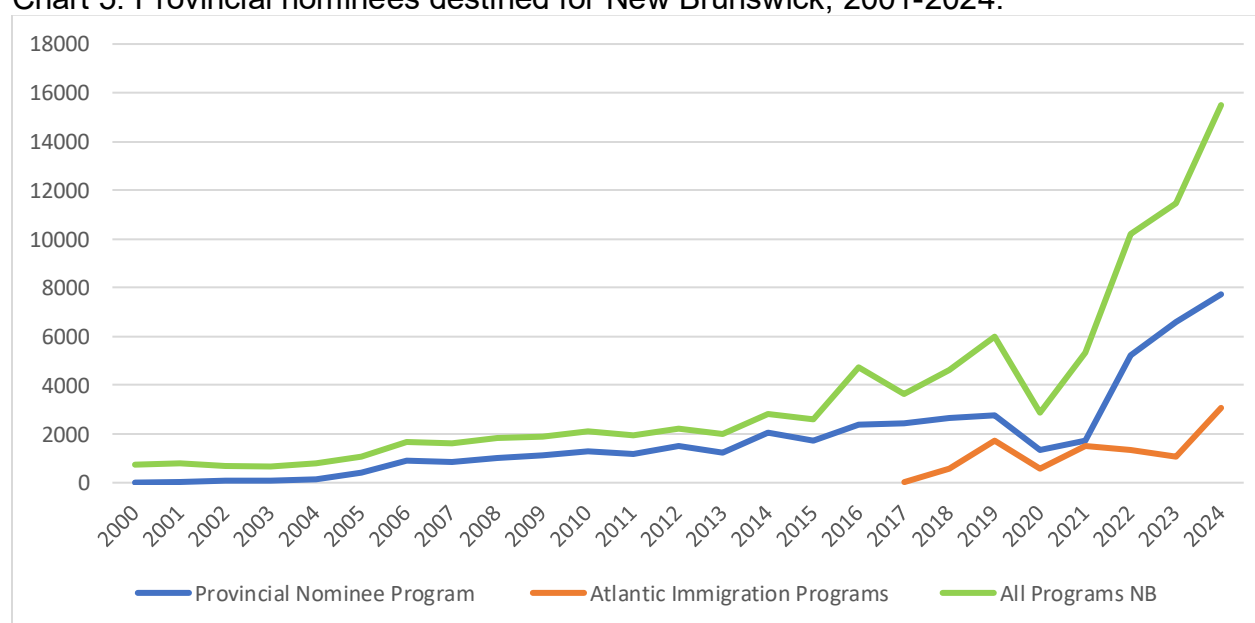
Chart 4: Economic Immigrants destined for New Brunswick by Subcategory, 2001-2024.



Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)- Canada - Admissions of Permanent Residents by Province/Territory of Intended Destination and Immigration Category

Data for Worker total and Others are available only from 2015-2024. Others include not specified elsewhere and calculated as (=Economic-Worker-Business class).

Chart 5: Provincial nominees destined for New Brunswick, 2001-2024.



Source and Notes: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)- Admissions of Permanent Residents by Provincial Nomination/AIP to Total All Programs.

In Chart 4, AIP was included in Workers and PNP in Others.

Age distribution among recent immigrants

Table 3 uses Labour Force Survey data to present the age distribution of new working age immigrant residents landing in New Brunswick within five years of each survey year, starting in 2006. The age distribution of resident non-immigrant New Brunswickers is also shown. The non-immigrant population has steadily aged through this period. The share of this group in prime working years of 25-44 has dropped from 29.1 percent in 2006 to 26.4 percent in 2024. Over 28 percent of non-immigrants were seniors in 2021 compared to 18.4 percent in 2006. This trend has serious implications for labour supply and for demand for services such as health care. The arriving immigrants' age profiles are much different. The percent of arriving immigrants in the 25-44 age category increased steadily since 2006, reaching 61 percent by 2021-2024. This reflects the increased emphasis of immigration programs on economic immigrants, as shown above, including the provincial nominee program and the AIP. Hence, younger and fewer older immigrants have been admitted. This helps rebalance the age profile in New Brunswick.

Table 3: Age distributions of recent immigrants and non-immigrants, New Brunswick.

	Immigrants Arriving 2006-10	Non- Immigrants in 2011	Immigrants Arriving 2011-15	Non- Immigrants in 2016	Immigrants Arriving 2016-21	Non- Immigrants in 2021	Immigrants Arriving 2021-24	Non- Immigrants in 2024
15 to 24 years	18.7	14.7	20.5	13.1	17.3	11.9	19.7	12.2
25 to 44 years	56.9	29.5	51.5	27.4	56.7	26.5	60.7	26.4
45 to 54 years	19.1	19.5	20.5	17.7	19.5	15.4	15.7	14.8
55 to 64 years	3.4	17.9	7.5	19.2	4.6	19.3	3.4	17.9
65 years and over	1.9	18.4	0.0	22.7	1.9	26.9	0.5	28.7
Total	100.00	100.0	100.00	100.0	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.0

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour force status by visible minority, immigrant status and period of immigration, highest level of education, age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts

Where do immigrants come from?

-
- *The source country mix for immigrants has changed over the current century. The traditional source countries of the USA and the UK have gradually dropped off the top five list due to faster growth in immigration from non western countries.*
 - *China ranked first or second until 2021-2024. The Philippines has been in the list since 2011-16. India took the top spot in 2021-2024.*
 - *Cameroon and Morocco have also become leading source countries, reflecting federal and provincial initiatives to increase French speaking immigrants across Canada.*
-

The countries of origin for immigrants landing in New Brunswick have changed over time in this century. Table 4 provides data on immigrants destined for the province by five-year periods according to each of their top five source countries.

The traditional top source countries of the USA and UK have gradually dropped off the list. China became a top 5 source country in 1991-1995 (Akbari et al 2007, cited in footnote 1). It remained in first or second place until 2016-2020. India has been a top 5 source country since 1996 (Akbari et al 2007, cited in footnote 1), becoming the number one country in 2021-2024. The Philippines emerged as a top source country in 2011-2015 and has steadily risen in the rankings. The share of immigrants coming from the top 5 countries has increased over the century from 41 to 48 percent. Furthermore, the share coming from the top source country increased from 10.7 percent (China in first period) to 19 percent (India in last period). Of note also, three African countries made the top 5 list in the most recent period. The shift in countries in this period may reflect the increased importance of the provincial nominee and AIP programs which are very tied to labour market needs. 'Push' factors may also be important to these immigrant source country shifts.

New Brunswick is Canada's only officially bilingual province with a population of approximately one third Francophones and two thirds Anglophones. In consequence, the province has a leverage over the federal government's plan to raise its Francophone targets outside of Quebec.⁶ This may be the reason for the appearance of Morocco and Cameroon in the top five list during 2021-24. In May 2025 the New Brunswick government announced it will try to negotiate an exemption to federal immigration targets, as it looks to attract more newcomers from Africa over the next five years. It will

⁶ <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2026/01/canada-exceeded-its-francophone-immigration-target-for-2025.html>

specifically call for more students and workers from Morocco, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Cameroon, Senegal and Tunisia.⁷

Table 4: Top 5 source countries of immigrants (Principal Applicants) destined towards New Brunswick, 2001-2024.

Rank	2001-2005		2006-2010		2011-2015		2016-2020		2021-2024	
1	China*	435	Korea****	2,105	China*	2,325	China*	2,520	India	8,030
2	USA***	380	China*	1,515	Vietnam	1090	Philippines	2,505	Philippines	4,245
3	India	235	UK*****	585	Philippines	930	Syria	2,390	Cameroon**	3,230
	UK*****	235								
4	Korea****	215	USA***	570	Korea****	900	India	1,790	Nigeria	2,755
5	Afghanistan	165	India	275	Iran	795	Nigeria	845	Morocco	2,235
Total (Top 5 countries)		1,665		5,050		6,040		10,050		20,495
Province Total		4,050		9,180		11,610		21,880		42,495

Source and Notes: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)-Custom Data-Permanent Residents

* China, People's Republic of, **Cameroon, Federal Republic of , *** United States of America ****

Korea, Republic of,*****United Kingdom and Overseas Territories

Where immigrants settle in New Brunswick

- *Almost two-thirds of all immigrants and 80 percent of recent immigrants lived in the census divisions that include Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John in 2021.*
- *The rest of the immigrant population, overall and recent, was thinly distributed across other divisions, with the exception of those which border the main urban areas.*
- *The concentration of immigration in the more urbanized divisions appears to be increasing, with Westmoreland (Moncton) being the destination of over 40 percent of recent immigrants.*

In general, most immigrants settle in urban areas, and this is also true in New Brunswick. New Brunswick's three main cities of Moncton, Fredericton and Saint John are in the census divisions of Westmorland, York and Saint John respectively. Table 5 compares population distribution by census division for immigrants and non-immigrants. While 42.7 percent of non-immigrants live in these three census divisions, almost two-

⁷ <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/settlement-resettlement-service-provider-information/2023-settlement-outcomes-report/2023-settlement-outcomes-report-part3.html>

thirds of all immigrants do so, and almost 80 percent of recently arrived immigrants. Immigrants make up 7.6 percent of the population in the Saint John census division, 8.5 percent of the population in Westmorland, and 9.2 percent of the population in York, compared to 5.8 percent provincially. Immigrants also make up at least 5 percent of the population in the census divisions of Charlotte, Albert and Carleton which border these three urban areas. At the other extreme, immigrants make up less than 3 percent of the population in the more rural divisions of Sunbury, Northumberland, Restigouche and Gloucester which together account for one quarter of the non-immigrant population of the province. Furthermore, the percentage of new immigrants that have settled in each of these four divisions is lower than the percentage of total immigrants who live there. The concentration of immigration in the more urbanized divisions appears to be increasing. Westmoreland was the destination of over 40 percent of recent immigrants, an increase from 15 percent of 1996-2001 arrivals (Akbari, et al, 2007). Westmoreland's share of total population increased from 17 to 21 percent between the 2001 and 2021 censuses, reflecting its growing economic role in the province and hence its attractiveness to immigrants.

Table 5: Geographic distribution of immigrants in New Brunswick, 2021.

Census Division	Total Population	Non-immigrants	Immigrants	Immigrants who arrived 2016 - 2021
Saint John	74,835	67,505	5,660	2,490
Charlotte	25,555	23,400	1,925	280
Sunbury	27,720	26,930	735	90
Queens	10,710	10,250	425	20
Kings	70,400	66,765	3,390	680
Albert	30,340	28,565	1,515	445
Westmorland	159,515	141,060	13,560	6,505
Kent	31,535	30,150	1,260	285
Northumberland	43,970	42,755	1,095	305
York	103,770	92,410	9,550	3,765
Carleton	25,945	24,085	1,495	390
Victoria	17,995	17,255	680	75
Madawaska	31,115	29,545	1,170	315
Restigouche	29,580	28,905	515	100
Gloucester	76,200	74,650	1,140	295

Source: -Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0348-02 Immigrant status and period of immigration by gender and age: Census divisions by province or territory.

Retention of immigrants

- *Only 47 percent of immigrants who arrived in 2012 were still in the province five years later, dropping to 37 percent ten years later.*
 - *Five-year retention rates improved somewhat for the 2017 arrivals (52 percent) but are lower than neighbouring NS.*
 - *Economic class and refugee immigrants are more mobile than family class.*
-

Retention rates for immigrants are low in New Brunswick, as shown in Table 6. For 2012 arrivals, the five-year retention rate was 47.1 percent, dropping to 37.1 percent by the ten-year point. The five-year retention rate for 2017 arrivals improved somewhat, to 51.7 percent. This is still lower than in the neighbouring province of Nova Scotia, which has the highest rate among the Atlantic provinces (62.1 percent). The improvement in the five-year retention rate occurred across all admission categories except caregiver. This likely reflects the overall improvement in the New Brunswick economy in the 2017-2022 period. The unemployment rate was 10.5 in 2012, 8.2 in 2017 and 7.2 in 2022.⁸

The retention rate varies by immigration category, with economic immigrants having significantly lower retention rates than family or refugee groups. Only 34 percent of 2012 economic migrants remained in the province ten years later. Within the economic immigrant group, those admitted under the skilled worker and trades program have the lowest retention rate for both admission years. The provincial nominee program has much better retention for either cohort. Retention rates for the 2012 Canadian Experience group were the strongest in the economic category, at 71.4 percent after 10 years. This is a sub-category of Skilled Workers program designed for applicants who have at least one year of Canadian work experience in a skilled occupation before applying for permanent residency. This, however, does not appear to be the case with the 2017 cohort, as less than half of the Canadian Experience group were still in the province by 2022 (though this is higher than most economic program groups). The exception to the low retention rates in the economic category is those admitted under the caregiver program. This program has rules that limit mobility among employers. The highest retention rates for the 2017 cohort are for family sponsored immigrants and refugees (74.5 and 64.9 percent respectively). These rates also are higher than the five-year rates for the 2012 cohort. Family sponsored immigrants are tied by family connections and may benefit from the social ties to the local community of their already established family members.

⁸ Statistics Canada. [Table 14-10-0020-01 Unemployment rate, participation rate and employment rate by educational attainment, annual](#)

Table 6: Retention rates in 2022 by admission type of economic immigrants, 2012 and 2017 admissions, New Brunswick.

Admission category	Retention rate (%) (Admission year2012)										
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total All Immigrants	81.3	70.4	64.6	56.7	51.5	47.1	44	41.7	40.3	39.6	37.1
Economic Immigrants	81.1	69.4	62.9	54.8	49.2	44.7	41.5	39.2	37.2	36.8	34.1
Skilled worker and skilled trades	70.6	50	42.1	36.8	31.6	33.3	31.6	26.3	25	30	30
Canadian experience class	87.5	85.7	71.4	75	75	71.4	71.4	71.4	71.4	71.4	71.4
Provincial/territorial nominee	81.1	70.9	63.7	55.2	49.3	44.6	40.5	38.1	36.3	35.9	32.8
Business programs	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Caregiver	100	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75
Immigrant sponsored by family	86.8	82.5	77.5	73.7	68.4	65.8	65.8	68.6	64.9	63.9	62.2
Refugee	66.7	52.6	55	50	47.6	42.9	36.4	34.8	36.4	34.8	31.8
Other immigrants	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Admission category	Retention rate (%) (Admission year2017)										
						2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total All Immigrants						81.4	68.4	60.9	59.2	55.3	51.7
Economic Immigrants						79.9	64.9	57.2	55.3	50.9	46.4
Skilled worker and skilled trades						80	50	43.8	40	43.8	35.3
Canadian experience class						77.3	59.1	54.5	47.8	45.5	40.9
Provincial/territorial nominee						80.4	65.8	57.7	56.5	51.5	47.1
Business programs						..	..	..	..	..	..
Caregiver						75	75	75	75	75	60
Immigrant sponsored by family						84.6	82.1	79.6	75.9	75.9	74.5
Refugee						88.6	78.3	68.1	69.4	66	64.9
Other immigrants						..	..	..	..	..	..

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 43-10-0018-01 Interprovincial migration of immigrant tax filers, by pre-admission experience and tax year, for Canada and provinces. Retention rate represents the percentage of immigrant tax filers continuing their residence in the province of destination, in a given taxation year. This does not consider immigrants migrating in from another province of destination. Note: some rates fluctuate indicating in and out movements in some cohorts' members of the admission category.

Text Box 1: Immigrant Retention in New Brunswick

Using the Longitudinal Immigrant Database (IMDB), a 2021 study conducted by scholars at University of New Brunswick examined the labour market outcomes and retention rates of immigrants in NB from 2007 to 2016. Immigrants were observed by years since landing across several factors, including applicant type, CMA/CA, pre-admission experience, level of education, source region, immigration stream, and knowledge of official languages.

- Of the three major NB cities, Moncton usually had the highest community (CMA/CA) and provincial retention rates, and Saint John had the lowest. However, retention rates for the rest of NB surpassed those of Moncton, Saint John, and Fredericton.
- Immigrants with pre-admission work experience were the most likely to remain in the province.
 - The least likely pre-admission group to remain in the province varied by cohort but was most often those with no pre-admission experience or those with pre-admission study experience only.
- Degree holders often had higher retention rates than non-degree holders.
 - Within the university-educated category, retention was not vastly different, with bachelor's and post-graduate degree holders having similar retention rates.

Source: Boco, E., Emery, H., McDonald, T., & Mokhtar, R. (2021). Immigrant income and labour market outcomes: 2006 - 2015 cohorts. Fredericton, NB: New Brunswick Institute for Research, Data and Training (<https://unbscholar.dspace.lib.unb.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/35c0fa49-b9c9-49af-86ce-ddad62d79c4a/content>)

IV. IMMIGRANTS IN THE LABOUR FORCE

The main driver of immigration policy in Atlantic Canada has been the need to maintain the labour force in the face of declining natural population growth. If the labour force shrinks it will affect economic growth as well as public service and finances. In this section we consider whether immigration has strengthened New Brunswick's labour force and hence its economic sustainability.

Labour force growth

- *Since 2007 immigrants have accounted for the vast majority of labour force growth, offsetting what would have been a decline in the 2012-2016 period.*
- *In the most recent period of strong economic growth immigrants accounted for 27 percent of labour force growth. Positive net interprovincial migration also helped.*

Total labour force growth declined from 2001 to 2016 and then turned around, with a dramatic increase in the 2022-24 period (Table 7). Without immigration the labour force would have shrunk from 2012-16. The vast majority of labour force growth since 2012 was due to recent immigrants (column 4b). Since 2020 the turnaround in net interprovincial migration, discussed earlier, also contributed to labour force growth, reducing the relative size of the immigrant contribution.

Table 7: Contribution of recent immigrants to the growth of provincial labour force, New Brunswick, 2001-2024.

Period	Total growth of labour force	Growth owed to recent immigrants	Growth without recent immigrants	Immigrants' contribution to labour force growth (%)	
	{1} ¹	{2}	{3}	4(a) ² = {2}/ {3}x100	4(b) ³ = {2}/ {1}x100
2001-2006*	12.8	2.1	10.7	19.7	16.4
2007-2011	6.6	3.7	2.9	127.6	56.1
2012-2016	0.3	0.6	-0.3	-200.0	200.0
2017-2021	9.6	6.8	2.8	242.9	70.8
2022-2024	25.6	6.9	18.7	36.9	27.0

*First row (2001-2006) based on data from census 2001,2006.

¹Attributed to natural growth and net interprovincial migration. Recent immigrants are those who arrived during the listed period.

²Measures percentage recent immigrants caused labour force to increase by virtue of their presence.

³Measures percentage of labour force growth contributed by recent immigrants.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001,2006 data tables & Custom data on Labour force characteristics-Table on Selected characteristics by immigrant status, gender, and population centre and rural areas.

Distribution of labour force in rural and population centres

- *From 2006 to 2021 about 50 percent of the labour force was in population centres, but this jumped to almost 55 percent in 2024.*
- *While the growth of recent immigrants in the labour force in population centres is particularly pronounced (70 percent in 2024), immigrants also make up an increasing share of the labour force in rural areas. The immigrant share of the labour force has risen to 4 percent in rural areas and 21 percent in population centres.*
- *In terms of gender, in 2024 females make up nearly half of the non-immigrant labour force in population centres, with the female share for recent immigrants and immigrants as a whole only slightly lower. In rural areas, on the other hand, females outnumber males among immigrants and recent immigrants, while the opposite is true of non-immigrants.*
- *Immigrants have higher unemployment rates than non-immigrants in the population centres but not in rural areas.*
- *In terms of gender, provincial unemployment rates are higher for immigrant females than males, while the opposite is true for non-immigrant labour*

Starting in 2011, Statistics Canada dropped the use of the term “urban area” and replaced the same with “population centre.” A population centre (POPCTR) has a population of at least 1,000 and a population density of 400 persons or more per square kilometre, based on population counts from the current Census of Population. All areas outside population centres are classified as rural areas. Population centre population includes all population living in the cores, secondary cores and fringes of census metropolitan areas (CMAs) and census agglomerations (CAs), as well as the population living in population centres outside CMAs and CAs.

As was seen in a previous section, immigrants tend to reside in larger population centres of the province. However, the issue of population aging affects all areas, large and smaller. Hence, if immigration is to address the population aging issue, a wider distribution of immigrants is desired. Place-based immigration (PBI) initiatives are designed by the federal government to attract immigrants to settle in communities across Canada in order to spread the economic benefits of immigration. The Atlantic Immigration Program and the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot were established with these goals. They are delivered jointly by IRCC and the respective provincial/community partners. The design of these initiatives has distinct settlement components that seek to leverage settlement services and supports to aid with the

integration and retention of newcomers.⁹ The PNP paved the way for more involvement at the regional and community level in the selection and integration of economic immigrants using a place-based approach to immigration. One example in New Brunswick is the New Brunswick Critical Worker Pilot that is available to applicants of Permanent Residency under the PNP.¹⁰

From 2006 through 2021 the share of the provincial labour force in the population centres was quite steady at just over 51 percent, with a minor decrease to 50 percent in 2016 (Table 8). However, this jumped to 54.6 percent in 2024, with the rural areas having negative labour force growth. The growth in the labour force in population centres was particularly pronounced among recent immigrants (70 percent in the most recent period), mirroring the findings discussed above for the recent immigrant population as a whole. Among non-immigrants, the growth of the labour force in population centres was negative in 2021, perhaps due to COVID, while this turned positive to a modest 6 percent growth in 2024. Rural areas also have benefited from immigration, with positive growth of the immigrant labour force since 2006, unlike the non-immigrant labour force, which declined in 2016 and 2024. Thus, the share of immigrants in the rural labour force has increased from 2.75 percent in 2011 to 4.15 percent in 2024.

Table 8: Rural Areas -Population centres breakdown of labour force in New Brunswick, 2006-2024

	2006		2011		2016		2021		2024	
	Rural areas	Population centres	Rural areas	Population centres	Rural areas	Population centres	Rural areas	Population centres	Rural areas	Population centres
Total ('000)	187.5	197.5	192.9	201.4	190.9	205.3	201.2	200.6	195.3	235.0
% growth			2.9	2.0	-1.0	1.9	5.4	-2.3	-2.9	17.1
Recent Immigrants ('000)	x	1.1	1.9	3.3	0.9	3.6	1.6	9.7	2.0	16.5
% growth			NA	200.0	-52.6	9.1	77.8	169.4	25.0	70.1
Immigrants ('000)	4.4	7.4	5.3	10.0	5.4	12.1	7.2	20.1	8.1	32.7
% growth			20.5	35.1	1.9	21.0	33.3	66.1	12.5	62.7
Non-Immigrants ('000)	181.9	188.1	186.4	187.6	183.9	189.8	192.1	174.4	185.5	185.1
% growth			2.5	-0.3	-1.3	1.2	4.5	-8.1	-3.4	6.1

Source: -Statistics Canada, Custom data on Labour force characteristics-Table on Selected characteristics by immigrant status, gender, and population centre and rural areas. Notes: -Total may not equal the sum of the Immigrant and Non-Immigrant categories, as the Total Labour Force includes Non-Permanent Residents

⁹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/settlement-resettlement-service-provider-information/2023-settlement-outcomes-report/2023-settlement-outcomes-report-part3.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.visavlogs.com/pnp/new-brunswick-pnp/new-brunswick-critical-worker-pilot>

Table 9 provides more details on the rural and urban labour force by gender in 2024. There are more female than male immigrants and recent immigrants in the labour force in rural areas, while the opposite is true of non-immigrants. 60 percent of the recent immigrant labour force in rural areas is female, compared to 52 percent of the total immigrant group and 48 percent of the non-immigrant group. In the population centres slightly more men than women are in the labour force in all three groups. Women make up 49.4 percent of the non-immigrant labour force in population centres, while the female share of the immigrant labour force is slightly lower, at 48 percent. These differences may reflect industry and occupation patterns, to be discussed later.

In terms of unemployment (Table 9) immigrants have higher unemployment rates than non-immigrants overall and in the population centres, but not in the rural areas. There are also gender difference both within and between population groups. Unemployment rates overall are higher for female than male immigrants, though the difference is smaller among recent immigrants due to higher male unemployment rates in that group. The opposite is true among non-immigrants, with the female unemployment rate lower than the male in both rural areas and in urban population centres. The unemployment rates of female immigrants are over twice those of non-immigrant women, both in population centres and at the provincial level, and even higher for recent immigrant women. The differences between male immigrant and non-immigrant unemployment rates are considerably smaller, with male immigrants in fact having lower unemployment rates than their non-immigrant counterparts, province wide (the exception being recent male immigrants, who have higher rates).

Table 9: Labour force and unemployment rates, immigrants and non-immigrants by rural and urban regions and gender, New Brunswick, 2024.

	Rural areas			Population centres			Provincial		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Labour Force ('000)									
Immigrants	3.9	4.2	8.1	17.1	15.6	32.7	21.1	19.7	40.8
Recent Immigrants	0.8	1.2	2	8.4	8.1	16.5	9.2	9.3	18.5
Non-Immigrants	96.7	88.9	185.5	93.7	91.5	185.1	190.3	180.3	370.7
Unemployment rate (%)									
Immigrants	x	x	6.2	7	10.3	8.6	6.2	10.2	8.1
Recent Immigrants	x	x	x	10.7	12.3	11.5	9.8	11.8	11.4
Non-Immigrants	9.6	6	7.9	7.2	4.2	5.7	8.4	5	6.8

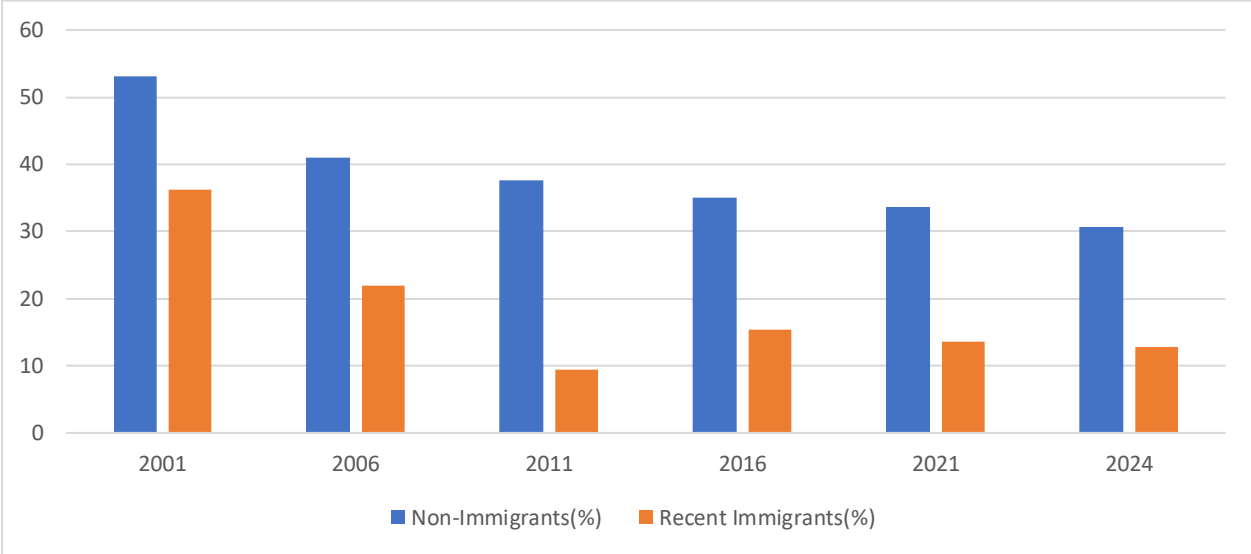
Source: Statistics Canada, Custom data on Labour force characteristics-Table on Selected characteristics by immigrant status, gender, and population centre and rural areas.

Human capital of immigrants

-
- *Over the past 25 years, recent immigrants have consistently had a lower share of individuals with a high school education or less than non-immigrants, and this share has continued to decline. At the same time, the proportion with university degrees has steadily increased and remains higher than among non-immigrants.*
 - *As a result, the educational gap between recent immigrants and non-immigrants has widened since 2000, increasingly favouring recent immigrants.*
-

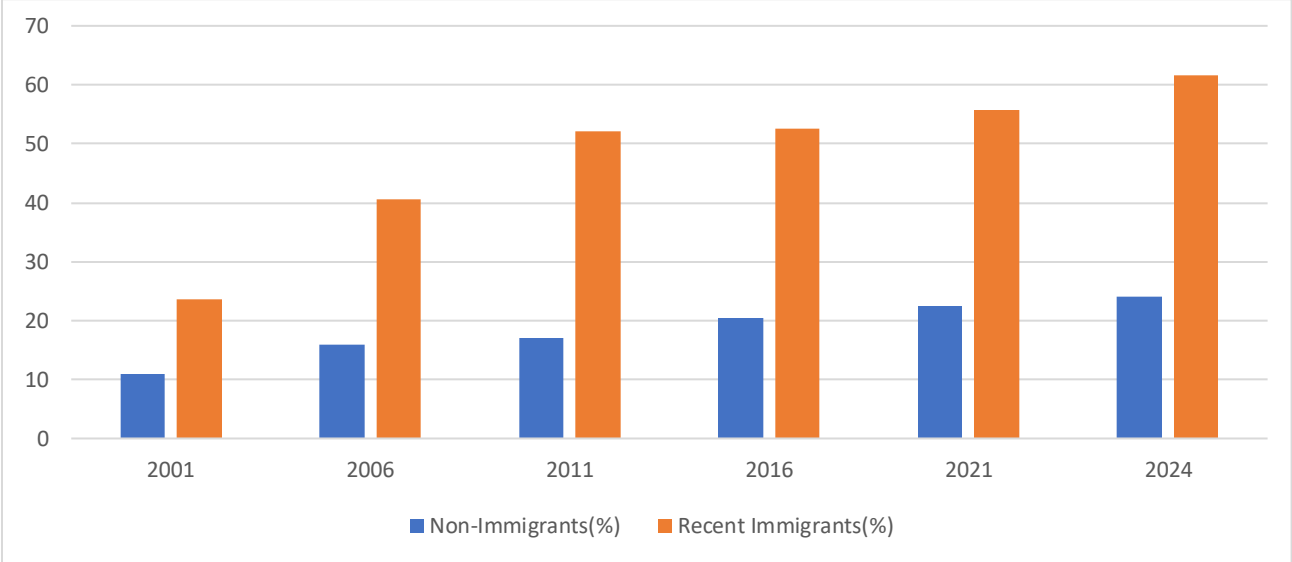
Canadian immigration policy has long been based on a point system designed to measure the human capital of prospective immigrants. Educational attainment is one of the key factors used to predict an immigrant's economic performance in the country. Canada's selection criteria (for economic migrants) are designed to expand the skilled labour force, which is essential for economic growth. Statistics Canada data is used to compare the educational attainment of recent immigrants and non-immigrants. Charts 6 and 7 show the percent with lower education (high school or less) and higher education (a university degree) at five-year intervals until 2021 and then for the year 2024. It should be noted, however, that the 2001 data may not be comparable to later years as they are based on the census while data for rest of the years are based on the LFS, which only added questions on immigrant status from 2006. The charts show a clear pattern of recent immigrants being more educated than non-immigrants in the labour force. Fewer than 13 percent of recent immigrants have high school education or less in 2024, compared to 30 percent of non-immigrants. The percentage for both has trended down over the time period, with a slight blip in 2016, likely explained by the high share of refugees among recent immigrants at that time, who were not selected by the point system. The reverse trend exists for the percent with a university degree (Chart 7), with a steady increase for both groups. The gap between the groups has widened since 2001, with 62 percent of recent immigrants in the labour force having a university degree compared to only 24 percent of non-immigrants in 2024. This analysis underscores the importance of future immigration streams for New Brunswick with a high human capital content to provide the essential and prerequisite workforce characteristics for industries in the digital economy and the knowledge sector.

Chart 6: Recent Immigrants and non-immigrants in the Labour Force with high school education or less, New Brunswick, 2001-2024.



Source: Statistics Canada -The percentage for 2001 is calculated using Census data table BO-0293, 2001 Target Group Profile, Table 2: Recent Immigrants with the total educated population as the denominator. For 2006–2024, custom Labour Force data is used, with the total labour force population as the denominator.

Chart 7: Recent Immigrants and non-immigrants within the Labour Force with university degree, New Brunswick, 2001-2024



Source: Statistics Canada -The percentage for 2001 is calculated using Census data table BO-0293, 2001 Target Group Profile, Table 2: Recent Immigrants with the total educated population as the denominator. For 2006–2024, custom Labour Force data is used, with the total labour force population as the denominator.

Occupational distribution of labour force

- *In 2024 the percentage of recent immigrants and non-immigrants working in professional and managerial occupations are about equal, at 25 percent.*
- *In 2024 a higher percentage of recent immigrants (34 percent) find themselves in the lowest skilled job categories compared to the non-immigrant group (30 percent), despite their higher level of education.*

The occupational distribution of the labour force partly reflects the human capital of the individual and partly the opportunities afforded a person, as one can be underemployed. LFS data on occupational distribution of labour force are based on Training, Education, Experience and Responsibility (TEER) classifications which were developed by Employment and Social Development Canada. TEER classifies occupations based on the level of education or experience that they typically require. A summary is provided in Table 10.

Table 10: Training, Education, Experience and Responsibility (TEER) level classification

Level	Description	Typical requirement
0	Managerial	University degree or college diploma plus significant work experience
1	Professional	University degree
2	Technical	College diploma (1–3 years), or Apprenticeship training (2–5 years), or Supervisory experience in a related occupation
3	Intermediate	College diploma (less than 2 years), or Apprenticeship training (less than 2 years), or More than 6 months of on-the-job training
4	Labour occupations	Secondary school completion, or several weeks of on-the-job training
5	Elemental occupations	Minimal or none

Note: Extensive experience in occupations with a TEER level that is one higher is often a substitute for the education typically required of occupations at a particular TEER level.

These categories are also used in the selection criteria of various immigration programs, notably the Federal Skilled Worker, Federal Skilled Trades and Canadian Experience streams. Primary applicants with TEER 4 or 5 are ineligible for these three programs. However, spouses and those who enter under other programs may be in those TEERs. Also skilled immigrants may be underemployed.

Drawing on Table 10, we examine the occupational distribution of recent immigrants compared to non-immigrants (Table 11). In 2024 the percentage of all recent

immigrants working in TEER 0 or 1 occupations is quite similar to that of non-immigrants, at around 25 percent, though in 2011 the percentage was twice as high among recent immigrants as non-immigrants. In 2024 44 percent of non-immigrants and 37 percent of recent immigrants worked in TEER 2 or 3 jobs. There appears to have been an increase in the share of recent immigrants in TEER 3 jobs over the period. In 2024 a higher percentage of recent immigrants (34 percent) find themselves in the lowest skilled job categories compared to the non-immigrant group (30 percent). In general, it appears the share of both recent immigrants and non-immigrants in the lower skill classes (4 and 5) has decreased over the period, though data is only complete for 2021 and 2024. The decline is more marked in the non-immigrant group. In general, there appears to be some downscaling of occupations for recent immigrant occupations relative to non-immigrants, despite the higher levels of education required for entry and the increased percentage of university degree holders in both groups. More research is needed to see if immigrants are being pushed into lower-level occupations due to non-recognition of their human capital.

Table 11: Recent Immigrants (RI) and Non- Immigrants (NI) in New Brunswick's labour force by major skill classification ('000), 2006-2024.

	2006		2011		2016		2021		2024	
Occupation	RI	NI	RI	NI	RI	NI	RI	NI	RI	NI
TEER 0	x	29.4	0.7	28.2	x	24	0.8	24.3	1	26.7
TEER 1	0.5	48.7	1.1	49.3	0.9	56.7	2.4	57.9	3.6	65.4
TEER 2	x	81	0.9	91.7	0.9	89.5	1.7	91.1	3.1	96.9
TEER 3	x	56.9	x	59.3	0.7	63.3	1.7	65.5	3.8	64.7
TEER 4	x	82.3	0.6	73	0.7	69.5	2.1	63.6	3.2	58
TEER 5	x	64.9	1.2	64.5	0.7	62.5	2	53.5	3.1	52
Unclassified	x	6.7	x	8	x	8.3	0.6	10.7	0.7	6.9
TOTAL		369.9	4.5	374	3.9	373.8	11.3	406.1	17.8	370.6

Source: Statistics Canada -Custom Labour Force data. 'X' = Data not available

Industrial distribution of labour force

-
- *Healthcare and social assistance is the leading industry of employment for both immigrants and non-immigrants.*
 - *Immigrants are overrepresented in Accommodation and Food Services, Finance and Insurance, and in Professional, Scientific, and Technical Service industries*
 - *Immigrants are underrepresented in industries such as public administration, construction, retail and wholesale trade, primary industries and cultural industries*
-

It is important to know the industry distribution of the immigrant labour force. Are they being absorbed across a variety of industries? Does the distribution across industries suggest underemployment of immigrants compared to what we know about their human capital?

Table 12 shows the industrial distribution of non-immigrants, immigrants, and recent immigrants in New Brunswick. Overall, more workers in each category are in healthcare and social assistance industries than in any other. For non-immigrants, the second most common industry is retail trade, while for all immigrants and recent immigrants it is professional, scientific and technical services, reflecting the emphasis on higher skill in our immigration policy. Construction and public administration are the next highest industry of employment for non-immigrants, compared to manufacturing and retail trade for all immigrants and recent immigrants. Interestingly, the pattern for established and recent immigrants is quite similar. There are some notable differences in the immigrant industry distribution compared to the non-immigrant population. Immigrants are underrepresented in some industries and overrepresented in others. For example, 9.4 percent of non-immigrants work in construction compared to 4 percent of all immigrants, and over 9 percent of non-immigrants are in public administration compared to 7.4 percent of immigrants. Immigrants are very underrepresented in primary industries, as well as in arts, entertainment and recreation and cultural industries. On the other hand, while only 5 percent of non-immigrants work in accommodation and food services, 7.3 percent of all immigrants and 8.6 percent of recent immigrants do so. `

Table 12: Immigrant and non-immigrant labour force (in thousands) by industry of employment New Brunswick, 2024.

	Non-immigrants	All immigrants	Recent immigrants
Total, all industries	370.7	40.8	18.5
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	10.9	1.1	x
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	3.4	x	x
Utilities	4.9	0.5	x
Construction	35.1	1.7	0.8
Manufacturing	25.3	3.2	1.7
Wholesale trade	9.5	1	x
Retail trade	42.8	3.6	1.8
Transportation and warehousing	18.7	2.3	1.2
Information and cultural industries	4.7	x	x
Finance and insurance	13.3	2.2	1.2
Real estate and rental and leasing	4.8	x	x
Professional, scientific and technical services	19.6	4.7	2.1
Management of companies and enterprises	x	x	x
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	11.8	1.2	0.6
Educational services	29	2.7	0.9
Health care and social assistance	55.3	6.8	3.1
Arts, entertainment and recreation	7.4	x	x
Accommodation and food services	18.6	3	1.6
Other services (except public administration)	14.8	1.4	x
Public administration	33.8	3	1.4
Unclassified industries	6.9	1.3	0.7

Source and notes: - Statistics Canada: Custom Labour Force data. 'x': Data not available.

The total for all occupations may differ from the total for all industries due to the inclusion of 'Unclassified Industries' in the industry classification.

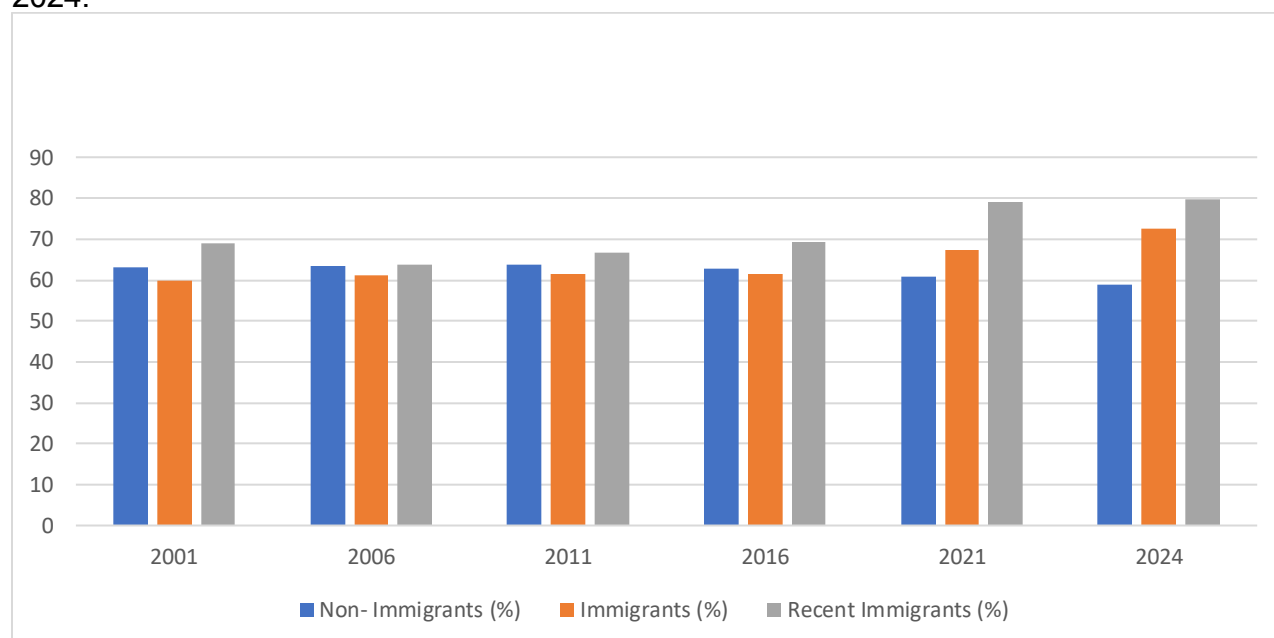
Labour market performance

-
- *Since 2021 immigrants overall have higher labour participation rates than non-immigrants. Recent immigrants have had the highest rates throughout the century. This is not surprising, as the non-immigrant population is aging and immigration policy has increasingly been employment driven.*
 - *In terms of gender, in 2024 both male and female participation rates were higher in the immigrant groups than in the non-immigrant population. This difference is most dramatic for recent immigrants compared to non-immigrants, with almost three quarters of female recent immigrants being active in the labour force.*
 - *Overall, the immigrant population had lower unemployment rates than non-immigrants until 2024, however a gender breakdown shows this was true only for males, as female unemployment rates were generally higher for immigrants. Recent immigrants have mostly had higher unemployment rates than either non-immigrants or immigrants as a whole. This gap is most pronounced for female recent immigrants, whose unemployment rate is more than twice that of the other two groups.*
 - *From 2001 through 2016 immigrants earned more than non-immigrants, but this reversed in 2021. Recent immigrants earned about the same as non-immigrants in 2001 and 2006, but their position deteriorated after that. This deterioration in relative earnings may reflect the shift in source countries to ones which offer education and labour market training that are different from Canadian labour market requirements. In 2024, recent immigrants earned about 82 percent of what a non-immigrant earned, while all immigrants earned 97 percent.*
 - *Among Economic immigrants, Canadian Experience admissions have the highest earnings. Earnings increase with time in the province, as would be expected.*
-

An analysis of labour market performance of immigrants compared to non-immigrants can help clarify whether immigration is supporting not only the population but also the labour force, helping create long term economic growth. Immigration policy is focused on addressing labour market needs, but how well is it working and are there obstacles to the successful economic integration of immigrants? Three important indicators of labour market performance that are analyzed in this section are labour force participation rates, unemployment rates and earnings.

Chart 11 shows the labour force participation rates of non-immigrants, immigrants, and recent immigrants. The labour force participation rate is the percentage of working age (aged 15+) persons who are either working or actively seeking work. The rate among non-immigrant New Brunswickers has been relatively steady over the years, at just over 60 percent, though it fell below 60 percent in 2024. Immigrant participation rates were relatively stable and lower than non-immigrant until 2021 but have been higher since then. By 2024 the participation rate for non-immigrants was just under 60 percent, while for immigrants it was 72.6 percent. Recent immigrants have had the highest participation rates of the three groups throughout the period, with a rate in 2024 of 79.7 percent. These differences largely reflect the different age distributions of the groups, discussed earlier, with recent immigrants being younger, as well as the increased policy emphasis on employment driven programs.

Chart 11: Labour force participation rates by immigrant status, New Brunswick, 2001-2024.



Source and notes: 2001: Statistics Canada: Census Catalogue – 97F0009XCB2001041

2006-2024: Custom Labour Force data. Recent Immigrants are Immigrants, landed 5 years or less earlier.

A gender breakdown is provided in Table 13. Both male and female immigrants are far more likely to be in the labour force than their non-immigrant counterparts. Slightly more than two-thirds of the female immigrant population, aged 15 and above, participate in the labour force. This is compared to only 56.2 percent of non-immigrant women. The labour force participation rate is even higher among recent immigrant women, of whom nearly three-quarters are labour force participants. For men, 77.3 percent of male immigrants are labour force participants compared to only 61.8 percent of non-immigrant men. Among recent immigrant men and women, the labour force participation rate is higher still, at 86 percent and 75 percent respectively.

While male participation rates are higher than female in each of the three groups, the gender gap is relatively larger for the two immigrant groups. For non-immigrants the female rate is over 90 percent of the male rate, while for recent immigrants it is only 86 percent.

Table 13: Labour force participation rates by gender and immigrant status, New Brunswick, 2024*.

	Male	Female
Non-immigrants	61.8	56.2
All immigrants	77.3	67.9
Recent immigrants	86	74.4

Source and notes: Statistics Canada: Custom Labour Force data. *Reported for population aged 15 and above.

A key indicator of labour market performance is the unemployment rate, shown in Table 14. Until 2024 immigrants had lower unemployment rates than non-immigrants. Recent immigrants, on the other hand, had higher unemployment rates than either non-immigrants or all immigrants throughout the century. This likely reflects the challenges of establishing oneself in a new country. It is not clear why immigrant unemployment rates as a whole have deteriorated relative to the non-immigrant population. Perhaps it reflects the differences in the age or industry distribution of the two groups, or the fact that recent immigrants comprise a higher percentage of all immigrants, given increased rates of immigration. Additional research would be needed to better understand these findings.

Table 14: Unemployment rates in New Brunswick, immigrants and non-immigrants, 2001-2024.

Year	Non- Immigrants (%)	Immigrants (%)	Recent Immigrants (%)
2001	13	9	13
2006	9.4	4.2	x
2011	9.8	7.1	11.5
2016	9.9	7.5	x
2021	9.3	9.2	9.7
2024	6.8	8.1	11.4

Source and notes: 2001: Census Catalogue – 97F0009XCB2001041 &

2006-2024: Custom Labour Force data. A 'x' value indicates data suppressed by Statistics Canada to meet confidentiality requirement.

Unemployment rates also vary by gender within and across immigration status groups. As shown in Table 15, for non-immigrants male unemployment rates are higher than female in every period, while for all immigrants and recent immigrants the opposite is true. The pattern noted above, where immigrants as a whole tend to have lower unemployment rates than non-immigrants, turns out to be true only for men. For women, the unemployment rate of immigrants has mostly been higher than that of non-immigrants. This may reflect barriers to employment, or other systemic differences such as the industry distribution of the two groups of women noted earlier.

Table 15: Unemployment rates in New Brunswick, immigrants and non-immigrants, by gender 2006-2024.

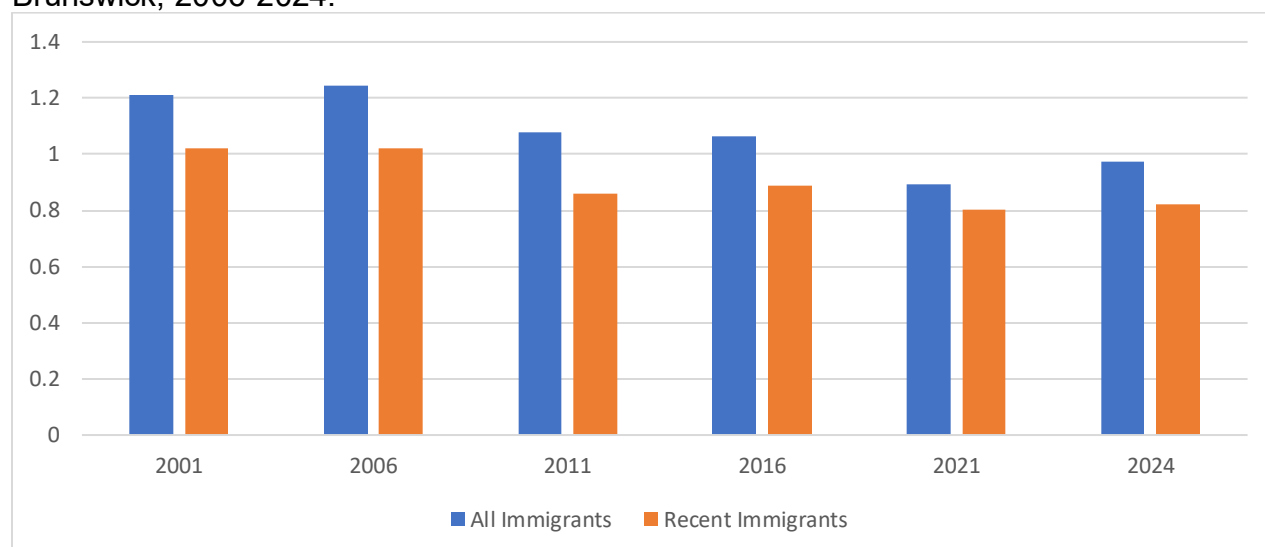
Year	Non- Immigrants (%)		Immigrants (%)		Recent Immigrants (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2006	11	7.5	x	x	x	x
2011	11.6	7.8	6.9	7.6	x	x
2016	12.9	6.7	6.6	8.8	x	x
2021	10.8	7.7	7.1	11.3	x	13
2024	8.4	5	6.2	10.2	9.8	11.8

Source and notes: Custom Labour Force data. A 'x' value indicates data not available.

Finally, the average weekly earnings of overall immigrant labour force and recent immigrants are compared to non-immigrants in Chart 12, using census data. Values higher than 1 indicate that immigrants' earnings are higher, while values less than 1 indicate the opposite is true. It is more meaningful to analyze the relative rather than the absolute earnings since the latter includes the effect of inflation over time.

From 2001 through 2016 immigrants earned more than non-immigrants, but this reversed in 2016. The relative earnings position of recent immigrants has declined over the period, with recent immigrants earning just over 80 percent of non-immigrants compared to slightly more than non-immigrants through 2006. This could reflect the change in source countries which might result in greater adjustment challenges for recent newcomers. The finding is surprising, given that recent immigrants are more highly educated than non-immigrants, as shown earlier, a gap that has widened in favour of recent immigrants since 2001. This outcome may reflect the undervaluation of their human capital in the labour market, cases of underemployment, or participation in industries with lower levels of remuneration.

Chart 12: Average Weekly wage rate of immigrants relative to non-immigrants, New Brunswick, 2006-2024.



Source: 2001: Statistics Canada, Census 2001; 2006-2024: Custom Labour Force data.

Table 16 compares the 2022 median incomes of different categories of economic immigrants to New Brunswick based on the IMDB tax filers' data. The first row shows the earnings averaged across all economic class categories. The second row shows this for skilled worker and those in skilled trades who apply for admission through the Federal Skilled Workers program. The Canadian experience class is a sub-category of this program designed for applicants who have at least one year of Canadian work experience in a skilled occupation before applying for permanent residency. Provincial/territorial nominees are individuals nominated by the province in which they intend to reside.

The highest earners are those who migrated through the Canadian experience class program. Not surprisingly, the median earnings of more recent cohorts is mostly lower than that of cohorts who arrived earlier and thus would have more experience and time to adjust.

The IMDB data reported in Table 16 are not available for Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP) immigrants. In a 2020 evaluation of AIP, conducted by IRCC, the AIP immigrants reported earning \$41,058 in 2019-20, which was the lowest among all four provinces, although comparable to 2018 regional average of \$42,100 as reported in the evaluation report.¹¹

¹¹ https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/documents/pdf/english/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/E2-2019_AIP_Accessible_Eng.pdf

Table 16: Median incomes of economic immigrants by their types, principal applicants, New Brunswick, 2022.

Admission Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	Median incomes in 2022 \$				
Economic Immigrant, principal applicant	\$60,000	\$55,100	\$49,900	\$52,200	\$46,500
Skilled worker and skilled trades, principal applicant	\$69,200	\$48,400	\$48,000	\$46,900	\$45,400
Canadian experience class, principal applicant	\$79,400	\$76,000	\$72,200	\$73,900	\$54,900
Provincial/territorial nominee, principal applicant	\$58,800	\$56,100	\$50,400	\$53,300	\$44,700
Business programs, principal applicant	0	0	0	0	0
Caregiver, principal applicant		\$33,300	0	0	0
Other economic immigrant, principal applicant	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$42,100

Statistics Canada. Table 43-10-0026-01(tax filers data) Income of Immigrant tax-filers, by immigrant admission category and tax year, for Canada and provinces, 2022 constant dollars. NA refers to data not available. Income = wages, salaries and incomes.

Text Box 2: Labour market outcomes of immigrants in New Brunswick

Using the Longitudinal Immigrant Database (IMDB), a 2021 study conducted by scholars at University of New Brunswick examined the labour market outcomes and retention rates of immigrants in NB from 2007 to 2016. Immigrants were observed by years since landing across several factors, including applicant type, CMA/CA, pre-admission experience, level of education, source region, immigration stream, and knowledge of official languages.

- Pre-admission experience in the form of a study and/or work permit is rewarded in NB, as with the rest of Canada.
 - On average, having some pre-admission work and/or study experience positions an NB immigrant to earn over \$32,000 more in starting employment income on average than the immigrant who had not held either prior to landing.
- Employment income growth is most pronounced for those who had both study and work permits before landing. These immigrants also have the highest rate of starting employment income (93% average).
- Those with post-graduate degrees before landing report the highest employment income on average.
 - Immigrants with post-graduate degrees before landing earn over \$50,000 in starting income – far above the provincial average. On the other hand, it takes bachelor's degree holders around three years after landing to start earning at provincial income averages
- It pays off to be bilingual in Canada's only bilingual province. •
 - The majority cohorts of bilingual immigrants report the highest employment incomes – starting and otherwise – of the official language groups.
 - Bilingual immigrants also have the highest rate (incidence) of starting employment income after landing (88%).
- South Asian immigrants report the highest employment incomes – on arrival and after years residing in NB. The lowest starting incomes are often reported by East Asian immigrants.
- Immigrants admitted under non-economic streams earn less than those admitted under economic streams, and this persists years after landing. • Of the Economic streams, those admitted under programs other than Provincial Nominee Programs earn more, often higher than the provincial averages.

Boco, E., Emery, H., McDonald, T., & Mokhtar, R. (2021). Immigrant income and labour market outcomes: 2006 - 2015 cohorts. Fredericton, NB: New Brunswick Institute for Research, Data and Training.

(<https://unbscholar.dspace.lib.unb.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/35c0fa49-b9c9-49af-86ce-ddad62d79c4a/content>)

V. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

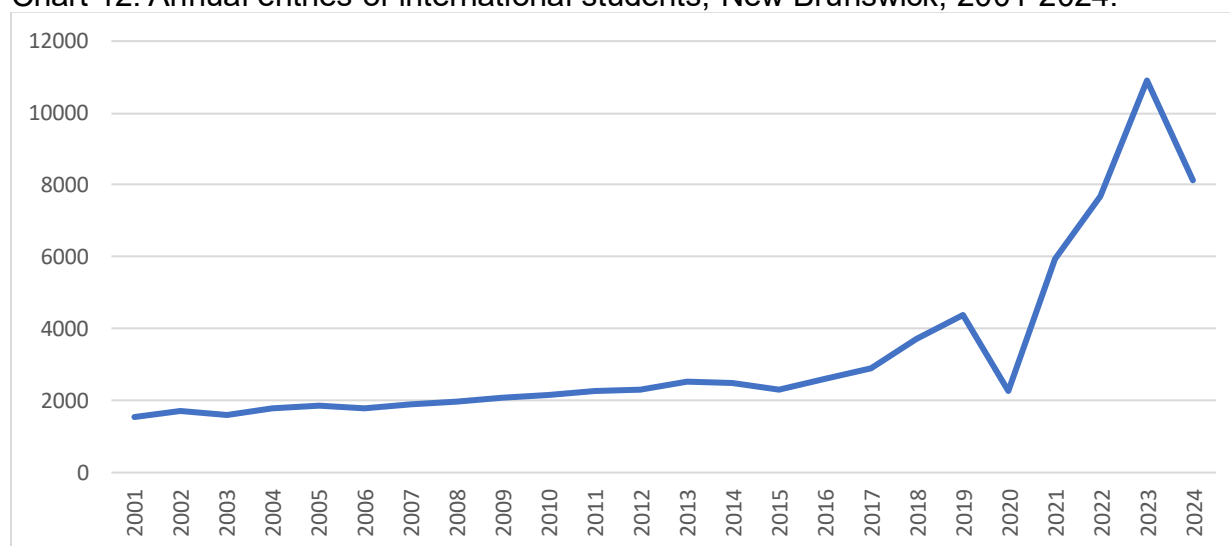
The number of international students entering New Brunswick annually was about 2,000 prior to 2010 and more than doubled by 2019. Following a dip during COVID, numbers increased to almost 11,000 by 2023. The federal cap on their entries brought their number down by approximately one quarter to just over 8,000 in 2024, creating challenges for the post-secondary sector.

International students are an important component of the immigration strategy as they can help boost the economy. The education sector provides well-paying, 'green' jobs and enhances research and development for other industries. Federal immigration policy provides pathways to permanent residency for international students, who are valued for their language skills, Canadian credentials, work-ready status and Canadian work experience. International students pay a tuition premium that has been important to the post-secondary system in the face of declining domestic enrollments related to population change. If they enter the labour market after graduating, they can mitigate the labour shortages associated with Canada's aging workforce.

Chart 12 shows the annual numbers of *new* international students who began attending educational institutions in New Brunswick since 2001. In the first decade numbers hovered around 2,000 per year. The number more than doubled from 2010-2019, rising to 4,370. After a dip related to Covid, they increased dramatically, peaking at almost 11,000 in 2023. The significant spike in 2021-23 (academic years 2021/22 and 2022/23) is due to the transition from online learning to in person because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In consequence, students enrolled in Atlantic universities who were studying from their home countries were required to come to Canada after the restrictions for air travel were lifted.

In 2024, following new federal caps on admissions of international students, their new numbers declined by approximately one-quarter to 8,110 students.

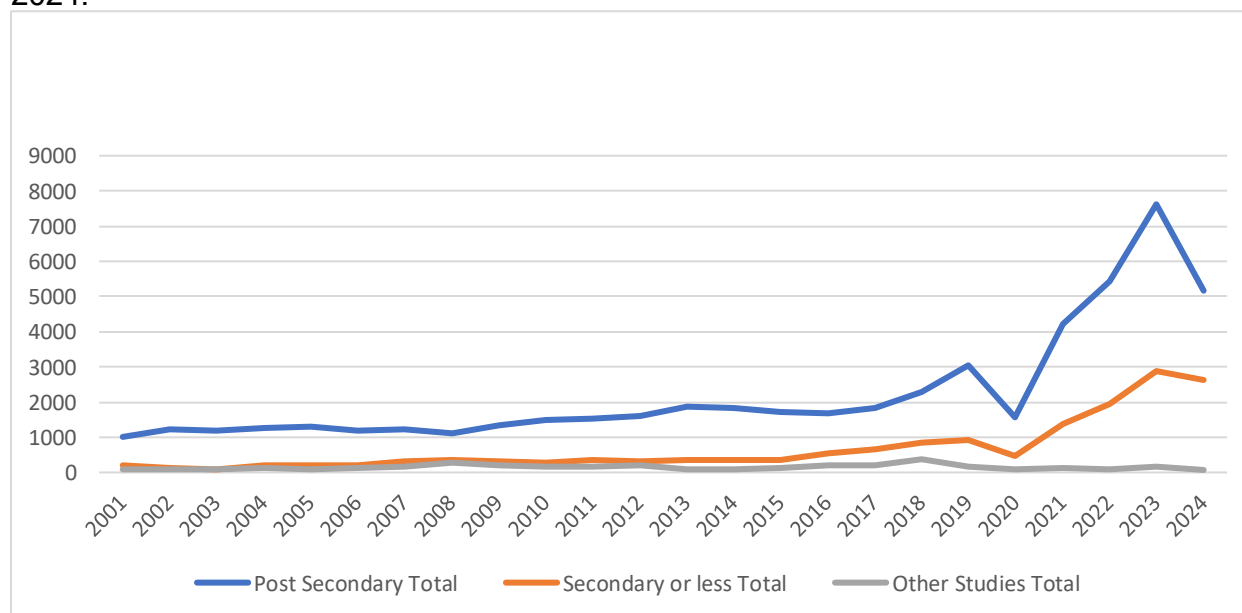
Chart 12: Annual entries of international students, New Brunswick, 2001-2024.



Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)-Custom Data--Canada – Study Permit Holders by Province/Territory of Destination, Country of Citizenship, Study Level, and Year in which Permit(s) became effective, 2000 - December 2024.

Chart 13 provides a breakdown of new international student entries by level of education. Most come to pursue post-secondary education. This is the key group for generating the economic benefits discussed above. Note that there has also been an increase in international students at the secondary level. The pattern over time is similar to that of the post-secondary students. By 2024, after the new federal regulations, there were 5,175 entries to pursue post-secondary and about half that number (2,625) arriving for less than post-secondary education.

Chart 13: International Students studying in New Brunswick by level of study, 2001 – 2024.



Source: Same as for Chart 12 above. for the year i

Source countries of international students

- *Until 2016, China remained among the top or second source country. Since 2021, India has occupied the top place. The Philippines, Nigeria, Algeria and Cameroon were also among the top five list source countries in 2024. As a bilingual province, New Brunswick is increasingly attracting students from French speaking countries.*
- *The country profile of international students has changed considerably over the twenty-five-year period..*

Table 17 shows the top five source countries of international students since 2001. In 2001 almost one third of all international students came from China, but this share decreased and by 2024 China was no longer one of the top five source countries. Note that until 2021 the US, a traditional source country, remained in the top five. India has been the top source country since 2021, accounting for almost fifteen percent of the provincial total in 2024. In that year Nigeria was a close second, at 1,150 students, a dramatic increase from 290 Nigerians in 2021. Nigeria has one of the world's largest youth populations. ⁽¹²⁾. Domestic university capacity hasn't expanded fast enough, so many qualified students look abroad.

Table 17: Top five source countries of international students studying (Year in which Permit became effective) in New Brunswick, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021 & 2024.

Rank	2001		2006		2011		2016		2021		2024	
1	China*	500	China*	535	Saudi Arabia	430	China*	670	India	1010	India	1165
2	USA***	160	Korea*****	140	China*	375	Guinea *****	105	Philippines	460	Nigeria	1150
3	France	55	USA***	125	Korea*****	165	Germany	100	China*	390	Algeria	645
							Mexico	100				
4	UK**	50	France	60	USA***	105	USA***	95	Nigeria	290	Philippines	550
	Japan	50	India	60								
			Tunisia	60								
5	India	45	Mexico	55	Mexico	75	Morocco	90	Brazil	265	Cameroon ****	330
	Total (Top 5 countries)	860		1035		1150		1160		2415		3840
	Province Total	1,545		1,770		2,265		2,620		5,930		8,110

Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Custom Data; Canada – Study Permit Holders by Province/Territory of Destination, Country of Citizenship, Study Level, and Year in which Permit(s) became effective, 2000 - December 2024:

¹² <https://www.citypopulation.de/en/world/bymap/youngpopulation/>

Incomes of former international students

-
- *Median incomes of former international students who transitioned to permanent resident status and resided in New Brunswick have been generally low in their first five years, below \$20,000 with the exception of the 2017 cohort. This is a troubling finding.*
 - *While their incomes do generally increase with time in Canada, they remain below the New Brunswick median. There have been dips in income in some years for most cohorts, perhaps related to COVID.*
-

Table 18 shows the median incomes earned by former study permit holders who subsequently became permanent residents and resided in New Brunswick. These data are based on IMDB database on income tax filers. Median incomes are presented in 2022 constant dollars, and therefore not subject to inflationary pressures. In their first three years after becoming permanent residents, former international students' median annual incomes are generally low, well below 20,000 dollars. Earnings after 5 years are higher for all cohorts except the 2012 admission group, whose earnings have fluctuated considerably. Indeed, for all cohorts the pattern of income growth is not consistent over the years. Of note is that former international students who became permanent residents in 2013, 2014 or 2017 saw much higher income growth over their first five years as permanent residents than the other cohorts, though the reasons are unclear.

Former international students who became permanent residents in 2017 had median income of \$30,100 by the year 2022. For comparison purposes, the median income among all New Brunswick residents in 2022 was \$39,500 (Statistics Canada 2025, Table 11-10-0239-01, reported for 2023 constant dollars). This indicates that despite the significant income growth of these former international students during their early years in Canada, within five years their incomes remain well-below the median for New Brunswick. Several factors may explain the lag in income of former international students. Difference in retention across fields of work may be a factor, with those in higher earning fields more likely to leave the province. Some may accept jobs below their qualification level to secure Canadian experience and meet immigration requirements. Post graduate work permit requirements may also limit mobility among employers. Some may face barriers in the labour market related to language or discrimination. Further research would be necessary to disentangle these factors.

Table 18: Median income earned in the first five years by former study permit holders who became permanent residents, New Brunswick (2022 dollars).

Admission year	Years since arrival				
	1	2	3	4	5
2012	15,300	8,300	14,500	11,400	14,700
2013	9,900	10,300	10,500	28,100	19,800
2014	3,700	5,500	12,200	11,900	12,000
2015	9,400	11,800	15,400	20,300	13,600
2016	9,700	15,400	8,400	16,000	12,100
2017	13,400	11,300	16,700	29,000	30,100

Statistics Canada. Table 43-10-0026-01 Income of Immigrant tax-filers, by immigrant admission category and tax year, for Canada and provinces, 2022 constant dollars. Income = Wages, salaries and commissions.

VI. CONCLUSIONS, POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The research presented in this report reviewed some immigration trends in New Brunswick over the past 25-year period. Data were analyzed on the changing population demographics and how immigration is shaping population growth, the trends in immigrant arrivals, their human capital, role in labour markets and the increasing importance of international students for the region.

Data presented in this study show that years of weakening natural population growth, which became negative in the current decade, have made the population growth in New Brunswick increasingly reliant on migration. Net interprovincial migration became a contributing component of population growth since 2010 and more so since COVID when employers across Canada began accepting employees who wanted to work from home in another province. However, as a Statistics Canada study has shown, more employers are now requiring their employees to be present for work in-person¹³. Furthermore, its vulnerability to economic cycles makes net interprovincial migration a less reliable component of population growth. At the same time, many interprovincial migrants include those returning home after retirement. In summary, international migration is expected to be the most important component of population and labour

¹³ Statistics Canada. [Research to insights: Working from home in Canada](#), 2024 Cat # 11-631-X

force growth in the near future. Provincial strategies cannot view net interprovincial migration as the primary component of population growth. There is a strong need for the province to remain actively engaged in future immigration target planning of the federal government and allocations under various immigration programs. Programs focused on local needs, such as the AIP and Provincial Nominee Program, have been particularly important for New Brunswick to attract immigrants. As well, integration and settlement of future immigrants in the workforce and civil society and creating more welcoming communities should be prioritized.

The study also showed that immigrant retention rates, both the short- and long-term, are low. Only about half of those granted permanent residence status in 2012 and in 2017, stayed in the province after five years. Less than 40 percent of 2012 arrivals stayed after ten years. Family class immigrants are more likely to stay than other classes. Family focused and individual focused immigration have their own costs and benefits. While family focused immigration has some short-term fiscal costs (dependents can increase health care costs, education and demand for settlement services), it has long-term benefits (spouses often join the labour force within a few years, children become future workers thereby increasing long-term human capital supply, etc). The individual focused immigration programs provide benefits soon after the immigrants arrive, but individuals have greater mobility than families and hence retention remains a problem for smaller provinces. Since the immigration policy goal is to relieve not only immediate labour shortages with minimal fiscal costs but also to attain long-term population and economic sustainability, a balance must be struck between family immigration and primary worker-focused (economic) immigration. Recent policy has favoured the latter. One compromise could be to prioritize economic immigrants who have young families.

The Francophone Acadian community of New Brunswick has been very vocal about increasing federal immigration levels in New Brunswick with Francophone immigration.¹⁴ Rising settlement of Francophone immigrants in New Brunswick is in accordance with the federal government's plan to achieve greater distribution of French-speaking permanent residents across Canada. Its bilingual status gives the province an advantage over other provinces. More Francophone immigrants now come from French speaking African countries. During 2021-24, Cameroon and Morocco were included in the top five source countries. Francophone immigrants are expected to increase in the near future with the launching of the federal 2026-2028 Immigration Levels Plan which aims to increase Francophone immigrants' settlements outside of Quebec¹⁵. As more Francophone immigrants arrive from the African continent, issues of social and labour market integration will need greater attention. More federal and provincial support for settlement services will be needed as New Brunswick's population gets more diverse. Some relevant research questions: What is the retention rate of Francophone

¹⁴ <https://www.cbcnews.com/2025/07/three-regions-announce-details-on-new-francophone-pathway-to-permanent-residence-0757823.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/corporate-initiatives/levels.html>

immigrants? How many of them migrate to the neighboring province of Quebec and to other parts of Canada? How do they perform in labour markets? Data also show rising numbers of Nigerian immigrants which could be because Nigeria has a very large youth population who are potential university graduates, but their country lacks the capacity to meet rising demand for higher education. Nigerians also have high English proficiency. These factors make Nigerian applicants competitive in Express Entry, International student pathways to permanent residency, and skilled worker programs.

With respect to the immigration of Francophones in Canada it is also important to note that a 2017 evaluation of the PNP, conducted by IRCC, found that PNP had shown little progress towards enhancing the vitality of francophone minority communities in Canada, with only 1% of PNs admitted under this program over the 2011-2017 period rs having been French speaking.¹⁶ As such, the PNP provided a limited contribution to meeting the Government of Canada commitment to increase the annual proportion of all Francophone economic immigration outside of Quebec. No new information in this regard is available.

Employment driven immigrant programs have resulted in a larger percentage of immigrants arriving with higher education. The percentage of non-immigrants who have university education has also increased at the same time, although it remains below that of recent immigrants. Although a higher labour force participation rate is found among recent immigrants, their unemployment rate remains higher, and earnings lower, than non-immigrants. Over time, recent immigrants are experiencing a shift in their jobs from higher skill (TEER 0-1) to low-skilled job (TEER 4-5) while non-immigrants are experiencing the opposite. This reflects a wasted opportunity whereby the concentration of extensive human capital in recent immigrants to New Brunswick is not adequately and strategically integrated into the New Brunswick work force and especially in the provincial digital industries and knowledge economy. Faster processing of immigrants' credential recognition is called for by these results. Research should explore if these outcomes are a result of employers' lack of knowledge of the quality of immigrants' credentials or their discriminatory treatment.

The LFS data used in this study cannot be separated by immigration programs. However, a 2020 evaluation of Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program (AIP) had found that almost half (47%) of job offers for AIP newcomers destined to New Brunswick were for jobs in the sales and service occupations, followed by the trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations (17%). These jobs are technical jobs and skilled trades (NOC B) and intermediate jobs (NOC C) which do not require higher education.¹⁷ A future study can investigate if the educational levels of AIP admissions match with the jobs they do. In contrast, a more recent study on economic outcomes of PNP found that of 1,110 provincial nominees admitted in NB over the 2016-2020 period were more likely than Canadian-born workers to be employed in higher skilled professional occupations as computer and information systems professionals (25.6 percent) and in business and finance (11.6 percent). At the same time, PN PAs were

¹⁶ <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/documents/pdf/english/evaluation/execsum-e1-2015-pnp-en.pdf>

¹⁷ https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/documents/pdf/english/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/E2-2019_AIP_Accessible_Eng.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

also more likely, than Canadian-born, to be found in lower skilled occupations such as Service representatives and other customer and personal services occupations (8.5 percent) and transport truck drivers (4.4 percent).¹⁸

While immigrants generally tend to settle in population centres, as do non-immigrants, they are also found to settle in rural areas where the labour force has been shrinking at a faster rate. This is a result of the employment-driven programs, such as the AIP or PNP, which aim to fill labour shortages. However, retention in rural areas is one of the hardest policy challenges. Policy implication: Any retention strategy should recognize that migration decisions are usually family-based and opportunity-driven, not just program-driven. Policy should focus on long-term integration support (many settlement services are for a limited time for new arrivals), financial literacy and career advancement support, mentorships for professionals, support for building networks, and support for cultural, religious and entertainment activities. Such supports can all create a sense of belonging among new arrivals and a more welcome society.

Data presented in this study show the number of international students entering New Brunswick annually was about 2,000 prior to 2010 and more than doubled by 2019. This helped post-secondary institution adjust to declining domestic enrollments due to a drop in the university-aged population. Following a dip during COVID, numbers increased to almost 11,000 by 2023. The federal cap on their entries brought their number down by approximately one quarter to just over 8,000 in 2024, creating challenges for the post-secondary sector. Most students have been coming from India since the end of last decade. China was no longer a top source country in 2024 when Algeria and Cameroon, whose citizens are primarily Francophones, became two of the top five source countries. Nigeria, another country from Africa, also made the list since 2021. Policies related to international students clearly need to be revisited to create stability for the institutions and to enhance the quality of the education and work experience afforded students and graduates. These policies are primarily federal, though the province and the educational institutions have roles to play. It is hard for both institutions and individuals to plan when the rules keep changing, as they have in recent years. As the findings above for Canadian Experience Class immigrants attest, international students can be an important source for New Brunswick to grow its population and its labour force.

However, median incomes of former international students who transitioned to work permit or permanent resident status and resided in New Brunswick have been generally low in their first five years, below \$20,000 with the exception of the 2017 cohort. While they improve over time, they remain below median earnings in New Brunswick. This matter requires further research and study to ascertain the reason for this anomaly.

¹⁸ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/36-28-0001/2025008/article/00004-eng.pdf?st=Qj830YjO>

A national study has shown that international students tend to be working in precarious employment more than domestic students do during their studies.¹⁹ This could be due to their lack of information about local labour markets, coupled with the need to support the higher tuition fees they face and the urgency to remit money to their families in their home country. Their time spent in precarious jobs could have a long-term scarring effect on their future labour market outcomes (slower career progression, higher probability of continued precarious employment and occupational downgrading or mismatch) because employers often interpret early job histories as signals of future productivity. Lower earnings observed in this study for former study permit holders could reflect this scarring effect. Providing a co-op or internship access for international students during their studies and a faster process to obtain post-graduation work permits could help avoid some of the scarring effects of job precariousness during and after education.

¹⁹ Spring, C.J. and L. Vosko. 2025. *The Effects of Activation: International Students' Employment and Transitions to Permanent Residency in Canada* Canadian Public Policy 51 (4) <https://doi.org/10.3138/cpp.2023-0>.