



New Brunswick Population and Demographic Counts

2019-2022

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Introduction

In 2021, the New Brunswick Institute for Research, Data and Training (NB-IRDT) released the first report in a Population and demographics count series that provides a snapshot of the population of New Brunswick each year.

These reports measure the total population count of New Brunswick and include information on New Brunswickers' demographic and geographic characteristics, as well as movement to and from the province. Each new update provides an overview of how the population has changed since the previous report was released, allowing us to see whether NB is attracting new residents and if individuals who previously left are now returning.

This is the fourth report in the series, and it updates our population snapshot by comparing annual results from **January 2019 until December 2022**.

The total population of NB at the end of 2022 was **823,220**.

The NB population grew each year between 2019 and 2022:

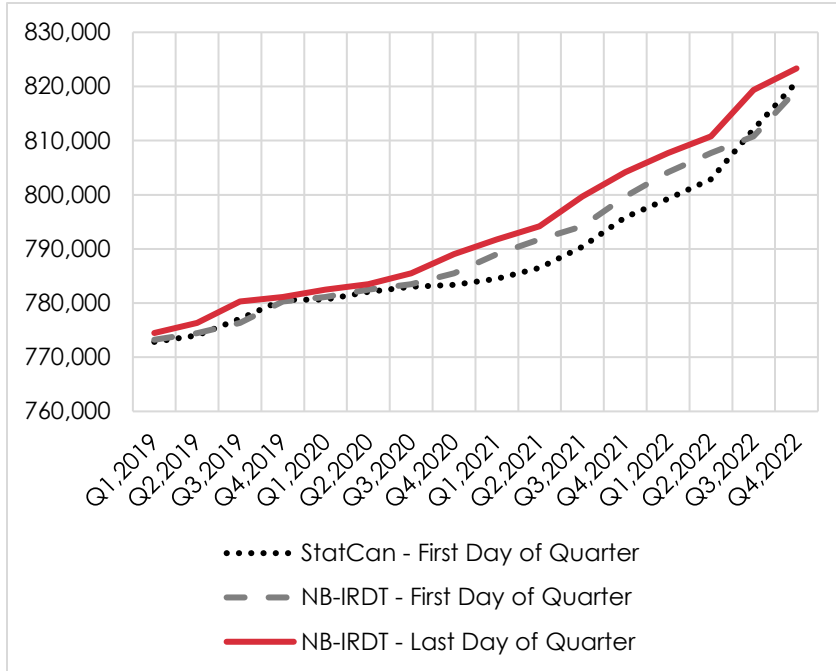
2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
1.0%	1.9%	2.4%

The pandemic years (2020/21) saw greater migration to NB from previous residents and citizens from other provinces, but this trend reverted in 2022.

In contrast, 2022 saw higher levels of in-migration from work and study permit holders.

These fluctuations in mobility likely reflect returns to pre-Covid trends.

Total Population Counts, Quarterly (2019-2022)



Quarters:

Q1: Jan. 1 - Mar. 31

Q2: Apr. 1 - Jun. 30

Q3: Jul. 1 - Sept. 31

Q4: Oct. 1 - Dec. 31

The NB population has been growing!

Yearly growth*:

2019-2020: + 1.0%

2020-2021: + 1.9%

2021-2022: + 2.4%

*compared to previous year

Notes: This figure presents population counts based on NB-IRDT data and Statistics Canada projections.²
NB-IRDT counts: [Appendix Table 1](#)

Where do NB-IRDT's population counts come from?

In this report, NB-IRDT's counts are based on **Medicare eligibility status** on the last day of the quarter. Annual counts show eligibility status on the last day of Quarter 4. If an individual has an active Medicare status, we assume that individual resides in New Brunswick because individuals are no longer eligible for NB Medicare once they leave the province. Based on NB-IRDT data:

The total population of NB at the end of 2022 was 823,220.

Immigration Status

The following pages break down population counts and movement by immigration status. Individuals are assigned a status based on the "Citizen Status" variable in their Medicare registry.

Citizen Canadian, Dual Citizen, Status Indian, Unknown (with country: Canada)

Non-Citizen Permanent Residents and Permit Holders (work/study permits)

² Statistics Canada's numbers are based on projections for the first day of each quarter (while NB-IRDT counts are based on **Medicare eligibility status** on the last day). This would explain why NB-IRDT counts appear higher than StatCan estimates. However, when we adapt NB-IRDT data to show **Medicare eligibility status** on the first day of the quarter, instead of the last, we see that the two sets of results are closely aligned. This comparison is used to validate our results.

In-Migration: Returning Residents and First-Time Arrivals

Returning Residents:

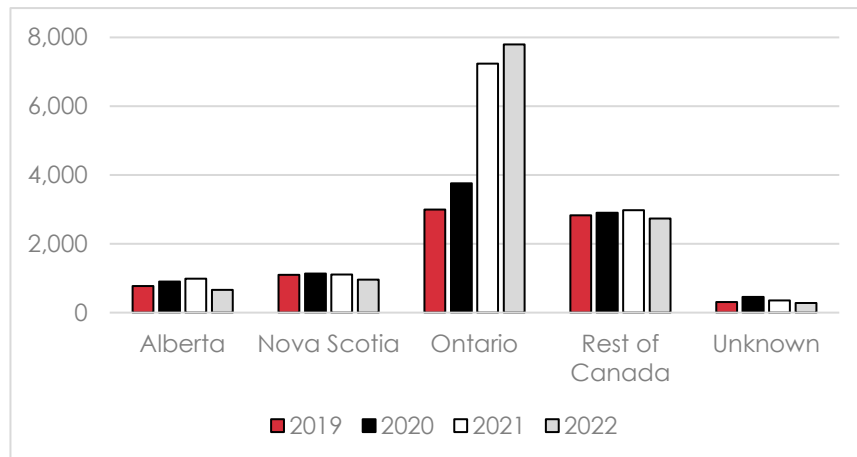
The number of NBers returning to the province increased in 2020 and 2021 but fell in 2022. This could indicate a reversal of the pandemic-related trend of more NBers returning home – possibly because of job loss and/or economic uncertainty.

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Did not previously live in NB	16,725 ↓	15,785 ↑	22,730 ↑	28,095 ↑
Previously lived in NB	3,735 ↑	4,025 ↑	4,035 ↓	2,830 ↓
Total	20,460	19,810	26,765	30,925

Source: [Appendix Table 2](#)

This decrease in returning NBers was especially notable among current residents of Alberta and Ontario ([Appendix Table 7](#)), particularly in the 25-34-year-old age group ([Appendix Table 12](#)).

Canadian Citizens Arriving from Other Provinces:



Source: [Appendix Table 5](#)

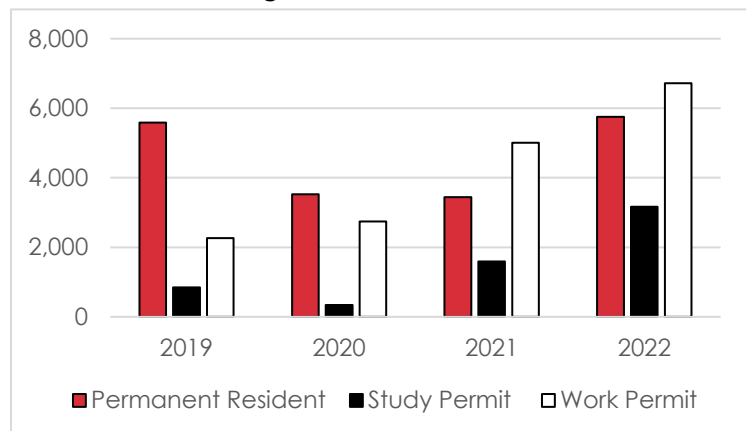
The number of study permit holders more than tripled between 2019 and 2022. The low number in 2020 could be due to Covid-related impacts, including delays in Medicare registration and admission to post-secondary institutions, as well as an increase in international students and new students in general doing courses online (either from another province or outside Canada).

First-Time Arrivals:

2022 brought a decrease in first-time arrivals from all parts of Canada except Ontario, which continued to rise, though at a slower pace than before.

However, the number of non-citizens arriving in NB for the first time continued to grow – with numbers higher in 2022 than in 2019.

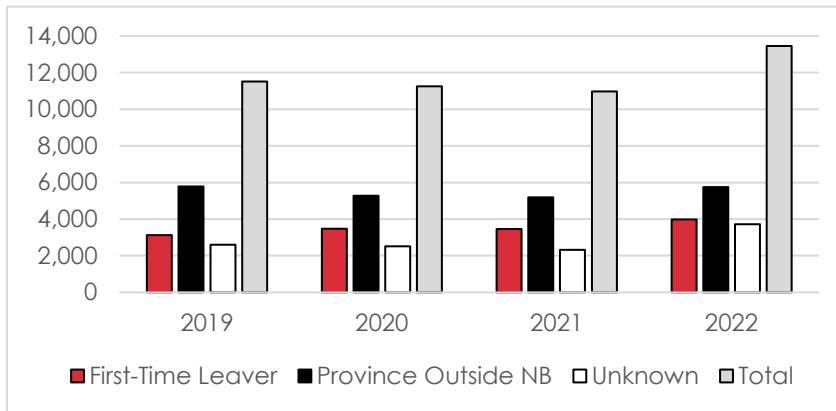
Non-Citizens Arriving from Other Provinces and Countries:



Source: [Appendix Table 5](#)

Out-Migration: Previous Province and Immigration Status

Out-Migration by Previous Province:



Source: [Appendix Table 3](#)

When we look at the out-migration of individuals who had always lived in NB ("first-time leavers") and both citizens and non-citizens who had moved to NB from another Canadian province ("province outside NB"), we see that out-migration was on the rise in 2022.

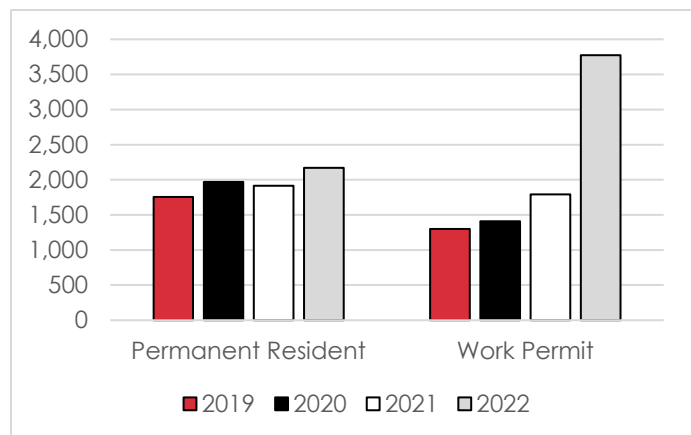
Similar to the in-migration trends, this could reflect a return to pre-pandemic mobility levels.

Out-Migration of Non-Citizens Living in NB for the First Time:

When we narrow our focus and only look at non-citizens living in NB for the first time, we see less consistent trends in the number of non-citizens leaving NB.

While there was a more gradual rise in out-migration of permanent residents, the number of work permit holders who left NB doubled between 2021 and 2022 – increasing from 1,790 to 3,775. It is possible this could be a reflection of rapidly increasing immigration levels.

Notably, we did not observe any out-migration counts between 2019 and 2022 for study permit holders who registered for Medicare. This could be due to a few reasons:



Source: [Appendix Table 6](#)

Because these counts focus on non-citizens who never lived in NB, they likely include new students enrolling in post-secondary education – many of whom may not have graduated yet. Those who did graduate during these 4 years, and registered for Medicare, likely intend to stay.

Meanwhile, some study permit holders have their status changed to permanent residents or work permit holders – often after graduation. If these individuals left the province, we would observe their departures in one of the other two categories.

Discussion of Findings

While the province of New Brunswick has seen overall population growth each year between 2019 and 2022, the in- and out-migration levels for certain groups suggest the province may be seeing a return to pre-pandemic migration trends.

During the Covid-19 pandemic years (2020 and 2021), NB saw an increase in returning residents – that is, New Brunswickers who had previously moved away from the province began to return home. However, that shifted in 2022, with smaller numbers of New Brunswickers returning. At the same time, NB received a growing number of new residents who had never lived in the province before. For instance, the number of first-time arrivals in 2022 was nearly double the number of arrivals in 2020 – and so, while fewer New Brunswickers returned, NB still saw the highest population growth of the study period in 2022 (2.4%).

Just as the number of returning New Brunswickers slowed in 2022, so too did the number of Canadian citizens moving to NB for the first time from other provinces. Only first-time arrivals from Ontario grew in number, though that growth was slowing by the end of the study period. In stark contrast, we see a rapidly increasing number of work and study permit holders arriving in NB for the first time in 2022. This increase follows a decline during the 2020-2021 Covid-19 years (likely due to Covid-related delays in Medicare and education registrations, as well as a backlog in application processes through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada).

The large increase in work permit holders arriving is accompanied by a similarly large jump in work permit holders leaving in 2022, which may simply reflect the rapidly increasing levels of immigration across Canada. One group that does not show similar levels of movement, however, is study permit holders (with a Medicare registry) who are living in NB for the first time. While the number of study permit holders arriving in NB nearly tripled between 2019 and 2022, we found no instances of these registered permit holders leaving NB during the same period. While this could be due to a change in immigration status (i.e., becoming a work permit holder or permanent resident), it is possible the majority study permit holders who registered for Medicare are still studying, or – if they have graduated – they may intend to stay in the province.

Key Takeaways

New Brunswick is still experiencing fluctuations in population mobility that reflect the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, but these shifting in- and out-migration levels have not disturbed what appears to be an overall positive trend of population growth.

It will be interesting to see what happens in the coming years as the province moves forward on the road to recovery from the pandemic with renewed investment in attracting and retaining new residents.

How to cite this product:

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