



# Summary Report

Retention and Mobility of NBCC  
Graduates: 2017 to 2019 Graduate  
Cohorts

May 2023

## Project Title

Retention and mobility of NBCC graduates: 2017 to 2019 graduate cohorts

## Principal Investigators

Herb Emery, Vaughan Chair in Regional Economics, UNB

## Research Team

Eton Boco, Data Analyst, NB-IRDT

## Project Number

P0080: Retention and Mobility of NBCC Graduates

## Acknowledgements

Funding for this project was provided by the New Brunswick Community College (NBCC). The views expressed in this study do not necessarily represent those of NBCC or its partners.

## How to Cite This Product

Boco, E., & Emery, H. (2023). Summary report: Retention and mobility of NBCC graduates: 2017 to 2019 graduate cohorts. Fredericton, NB: New Brunswick Institute for Research, Data and Training.

[Read the Full Report](#)



## Why is This Study Important?

For the last few years, population retention and population mobility have been top of mind for New Brunswickers. We have become very familiar with the challenges of an aging, retiring population and have witnessed young workers moving to other provinces. Yet, there is another important side of population mobility that does not receive as much attention: The movement of New Brunswickers within the province.

Migration from rural and small-town areas to larger urban centers has been a long-standing trend, and as of July 2021, more than half of New Brunswick's population lives in either Moncton, Saint John, or Fredericton.<sup>1,2</sup> Around the world, young adults in particular are choosing to leave rural and small towns for urban areas.

Research on the mobility decisions of post-secondary graduates shows that 97% of college graduates from New Brunswick still live in the province 1 year after graduation - but where in New Brunswick do they live? If students move to another region of New Brunswick for school, are they less likely to return home? Do they tend to stay close to the location where they studied?

Since college graduates are the most likely to remain in the province, understanding where they choose to live - and why - is key to learning how best to incentivize graduates to stay and contribute to their local economies.

This report looks at the the movement decisions of graduates from the New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) to see if there is a correlation between which of NBCC's 6 campuses they attend and where they choose to settle after graduation. The results will be valuable in helping NBCC choose whether to consider concentrating its programs or organizing even more programs for study in more communities.



## How Was This Study Completed?

To undertake this study, a team of researchers from NB-IRDT used linked Student Data and geographic Citizen Data available through NB-IRDT's secure platform to match de-identified NBCC graduates with their NBCC campus and locations of residence across New Brunswick.

This report matches graduates in the data by considering an active Medicare status 1 or 3 years post-graduation and updated Medicare addresses as proof of residence in the province. Geographic locations are defined using 3 Statistics Canada geography levels: Census Metropolitan Area, Census Agglomeration, and Census Division. Pre-enrollment residence, campus location, and post-graduation residence are considered for all matched NBCC graduates from the 2017, 2018, and 2019 graduating cohorts.

A Generalized Least Squares regression model is used to determine the extent to which various factors affect graduates' mobility decisions.

## Limitations



While reading the results on the next pages, it is important to remember that there are certain limitations to this study. For instance, if an NBCC graduate is not from New Brunswick (i.e., they are an international student or are from another province), they are sometimes not found in the Citizen Data. This may be because they see no reason to register for Medicare (if they do not plan to stay), or they may not be eligible. These graduates' mobility cannot be tracked over time.

This is also true for a small number of New Brunswick graduates missing from the Citizen Data - potentially due to inconsistent or missing records needed for data matching. "Unmatched" individuals may or may not be in the province.



# NBCC Graduates' Campuses and Mobility Decisions

## NBCC has campuses in 6 regions of New Brunswick:

- Miramichi
- Woodstock
- Saint John
- Moncton
- Fredericton
- Saint Andrews

Graduates who attend an NBCC campus near their hometown are considered **local**. Graduates who move to attend an NBCC campus outside their hometown are **non-local**.



NBCC campuses in smaller regions appear to retain their local graduate populations at reasonably high rates, but they are less successful at retaining non-local graduates (attraction rates) compared to campuses in larger population centres.



### 3 years after graduating from the smaller campuses in Miramichi, Woodstock, or Saint Andrews...

**88-90%**  
of local graduates remain.

**5-7%**  
of non-local graduates remain.



These attraction rates are lower than the 3-year attraction rates for NBCC Moncton (14%), Fredericton (30%), and Saint John (13%).

Overall, however, the majority of NBCC graduates chose to attend their local campus.



# NBCC Graduates' Campuses and Mobility Decisions

**NBCC Fredericton** has the highest proportion of **non-local** graduates who settle in the region after graduation.

**30%** live in Fredericton 3 years after graduation.

**NBCC Saint John** has the highest proportion of **local** graduates who live in the region after graduation.

**92%** live in Saint John 3 years after graduation.



For NBCC graduates who attended a non-local campus, **over 85%** return to their pre-enrollment area of residence.

- NBCC graduates who lived in Moncton before college but attended a campus elsewhere are **most likely to return** to their pre-college residence (Moncton) after graduation.

↳ Their 3-year return rate was **92%**.

- On the other hand, graduates who used to live in Fredericton or Saint John but did not attend NBCC in their home town are the **least likely to return** to their pre-college residence after graduation.

↳ Their 3-year return rate was **86%**.

Attending a local campus vs. moving to attend a non-local campus doesn't appear to greatly influence population retention 3 years later.



## Conclusions

Overall, this report's examination of the campus locations and post-graduation movement decisions of NBCC graduates shows that students' living decisions don't seem to be significantly altered by the location of their campus - including whether they attended a local campus or moved to attend a non-local one.

Most graduates attended an NBCC campus in the same area where they lived before college (pre-enrollment). Of these local graduates, the majority remain in the local area after graduation. Even among students who attended a non-local campus, most (over 85%) return to their pre-enrollment area after graduation. In other words, a high proportion of NBCC graduates live in the same area they lived before college - whether they attended college there or not.

Of the graduates who moved to attend a non-local campus and did not return, a higher proportion was more likely to reside in Fredericton, Moncton, or Saint John than in the smaller campus areas.

These results suggest that having access to a local NBCC campus vs. having to move to attend NBCC does not substantially alter graduates' decision about where to live after graduation. Even the NBCC campuses in smaller areas were found to retain a very high proportion of graduates who originated from those areas. However, it is possible that having access to a local campus increases total participation in NBCC programs, even if it does not impact residence choices after graduation.

## References

1. Statistics Canada. (2022, December 21). Population estimates on July 1st, by age and sex (Table no. 17-10-0005-01). Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1710000501>
2. Statistics Canada. (2023, January 11). Population estimates, July 1, by census metropolitan area and census agglomeration, 2016 boundaries (Table no. 17-10-0135-01). Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1710013501>