

CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE INDUSTRY

NEW BRUNSWICK

HIGHLIGHTS 2024 - 2033



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SUMMARY

Construction investment levels increased slightly in New Brunswick in 2023 as growth in the non-residential sector offset a slight contraction in the residential sector.

Activity in both has generally been on the rise since 2019, with the residential sector supported by record low interest rates and a comparatively low cost of living, and non-residential bolstered by strong activity in both engineering construction and the construction of industrial, commercial, and institutional buildings.

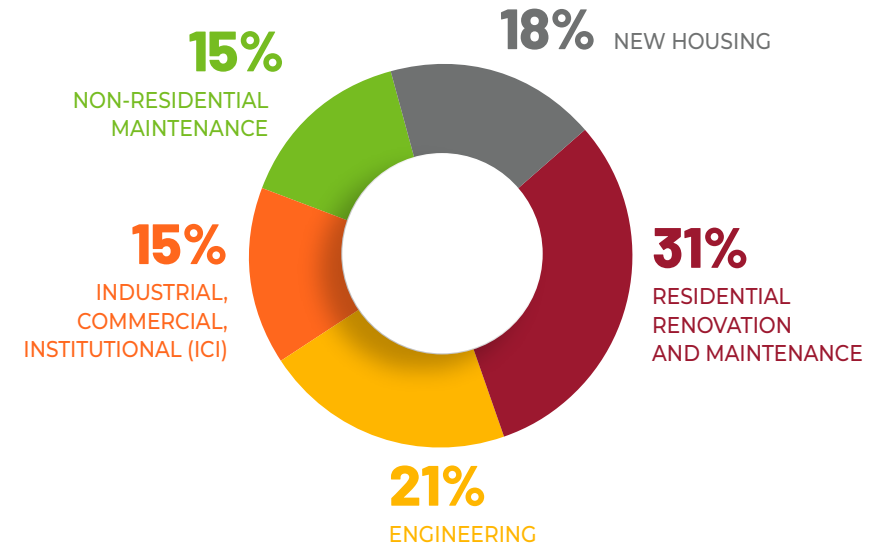
The BuildForce Canada outlook calls for relatively muted growth through the short term. Residential investment levels are expected to step back again in 2024 before returning to growth in 2025 and beyond. Interest rates continue to slow demand for new housing. As these stabilize and consumer spending rebounds, housing starts are expected to return to growth, supported by strong levels of immigration.

Non-residential investment is also expected to experience a slight pullback in the short term as work concludes on several major engineering-construction and government building projects. Investment rises swiftly and sharply in 2026 and beyond as several major projects, including the Mactaquac Dam, commence and ramp up.

Growth in demand in both the residential and non-residential sectors across the forecast period will require the provincial construction labour force to increase by 3,100 workers. By 2033, the industry will likely need to recruit and retain as many as 9,200 additional workers to keep pace with expansion and retirements, as an estimated 6,100 workers, or 21% of the 2023 construction labour force, are expected to retire.

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

Distribution of construction employment in 2023, New Brunswick



10-Year Workforce Outlook for New Brunswick



HIGHLIGHTS

- New housing investment levels reached a peak in 2022 and are projected to contract into 2024 as housing starts decline. They return to growth between 2025 and 2029.
- After 2024, residential employment is expected to chart a steady series of increases to 2030, with gains strongest in renovation.
- Non-residential investment levels are expected to chart a strong upward trend after 2026 with the start of work on the Mactaquac Dam.
- Engineering-construction employment demands rise by 24% across the forecast period, with labour market conditions tightening among many trades and occupations.



NEW BRUNSWICK CONSTRUCTION OUTLOOK

New Brunswick's construction sector saw a slight gain in investment levels in 2023. Output in the residential sector stepped down from the peak it reported in 2022, as rising interest rates curbed housing starts and renovation activity. Non-residential investment levels, meanwhile, rose slightly on the strength of ongoing work on wastewater projects, wind farms, and roads, highways, and bridges projects.

The provincial economy rebounded strongly from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, supported by elevated levels of consumer spending as well as business and government investment. Interest rate increases in 2022 and 2023, however, weakened many of these segments, and brought GDP growth levels to below 2% in each year. GDP growth in 2024 is projected to contract further as elevated interest rates continue to dampen growth. Non-residential investment will also be weighed down by project completions. An up cycle is expected to emerge in 2025 and carry into the middle years of the forecast, with annual growth rates projected at 2% or above.

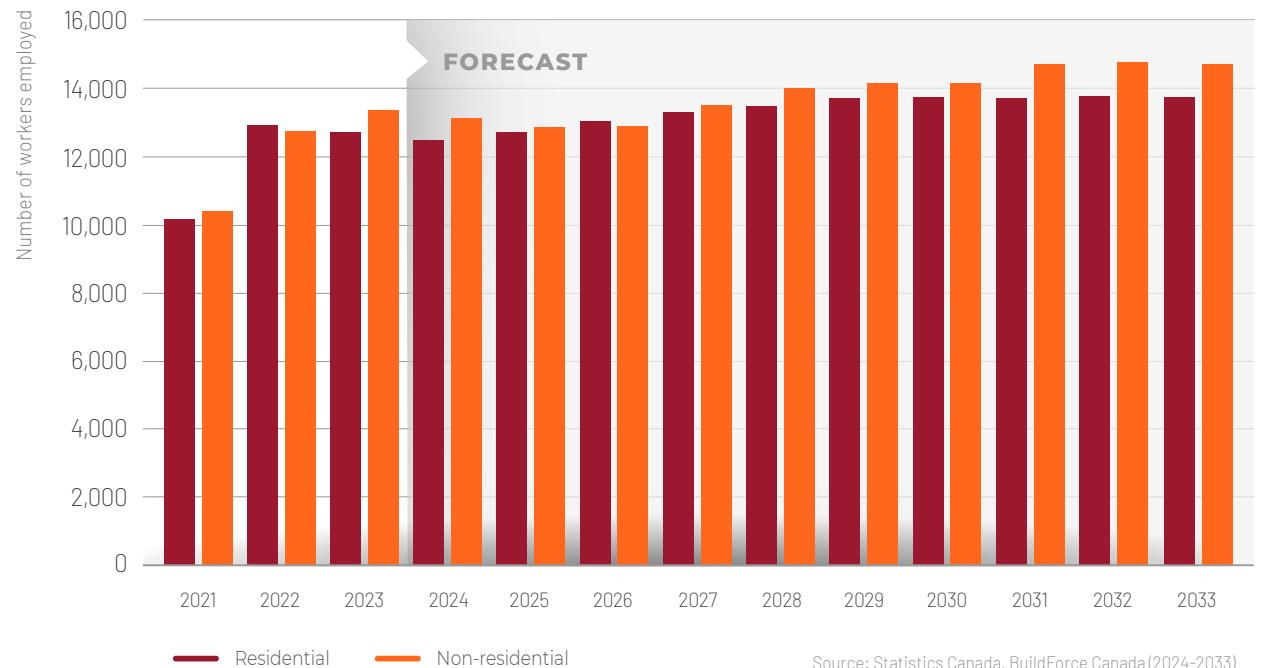
The outlook for the province's residential construction sector calls for a further contraction into 2024 before investment levels cycle up to the end of the forecast period. Housing starts return to growth between 2025 and 2029 while renovation activity grows steadily through the decade. As a result, residential employment is projected to grow by 8% over 2023 levels by 2033, with gains in renovation and maintenance offsetting a slight contraction in new housing.

The non-residential sector, meanwhile, is expected to record a slight pullback over the short term as several major projects in the engineering-construction and industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) building construction sectors conclude. Investment levels cycle up in 2027 and beyond as work starts on the Mactaquac Dam project. Employment is expected to increase throughout the forecast period with engineering-construction increasing by 24% and ICI building employment up 8%. While maintenance-related employment contracts by 8%, this contraction is not enough to dampen overall non-residential employment growth. By 2033, non-residential employment is projected to be 10% higher than 2023 levels.

Figure 1 shows the anticipated changes in residential and non-residential employment across the forecast period.

The industry will need to recruit 9,200 workers over the forecast period, driven largely by the expected retirement of 6,100 workers. While the recruiting of first-time new entrants from the local population is expected to partially offset the impact of retirements on the labour force, these new workers do not possess the skills and experience of retiring workers, which may compound potential skilled labour shortages locally.

Figure 1: Construction employment growth outlook, New Brunswick



AN AGING POPULATION SUSTAINED BY IMMIGRATION

New Brunswick is experiencing a shift in its population age structure.

Figure 2 shows that the share of people aged between 15 and 24 years of age and who are about to enter the province's labour force comprised 11% of the population in 2023. That figure is expected to remain unchanged by 2033. Over the same period, however, the share of the population over 65 years of age and mainly retired is projected to grow from 23% to 24%.

This trend will create challenges regarding future labour force recruitment. All industries will be competing for a relatively smaller pool of youth over the next 10 years.

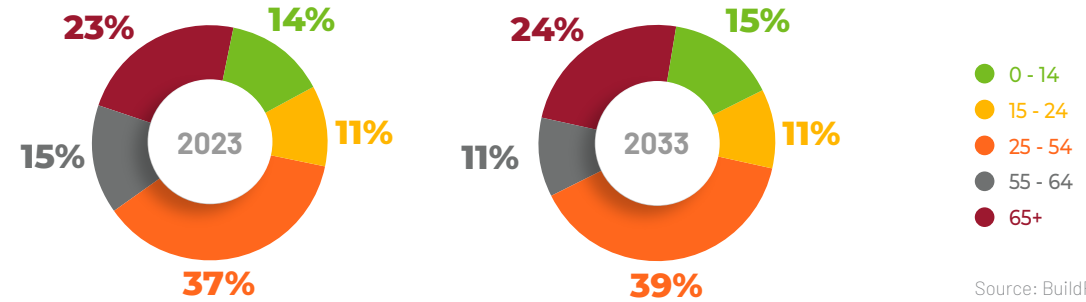
Meanwhile, New Brunswick is faced with the additional challenge of an aging population. The province's natural rate of population growth* has been negative since 2015, and is trending lower.

As a result, in-migration has become the sole source of population growth in the province. Levels spiked in 2022 and 2023 with a surge in net interprovincial migration and a major influx of both permanent and non-permanent residents from outside the country. Many in the latter group are students who could choose to obtain permanent residency status after graduation.

Although these rates of growth are unlikely to be sustained, New Brunswick will also benefit from the federal government's increased immigration targets for 2024 and 2025. Moreover, with many immigrants coming to the province in their prime working- and child-bearing ages, the natural rate of population growth should benefit from some upward pressure. Increasingly, immigrants will be essential to supporting growth in the province's core working-age group of 25 to 54 years of age, and may help to ease labour-market pressures over the decade.

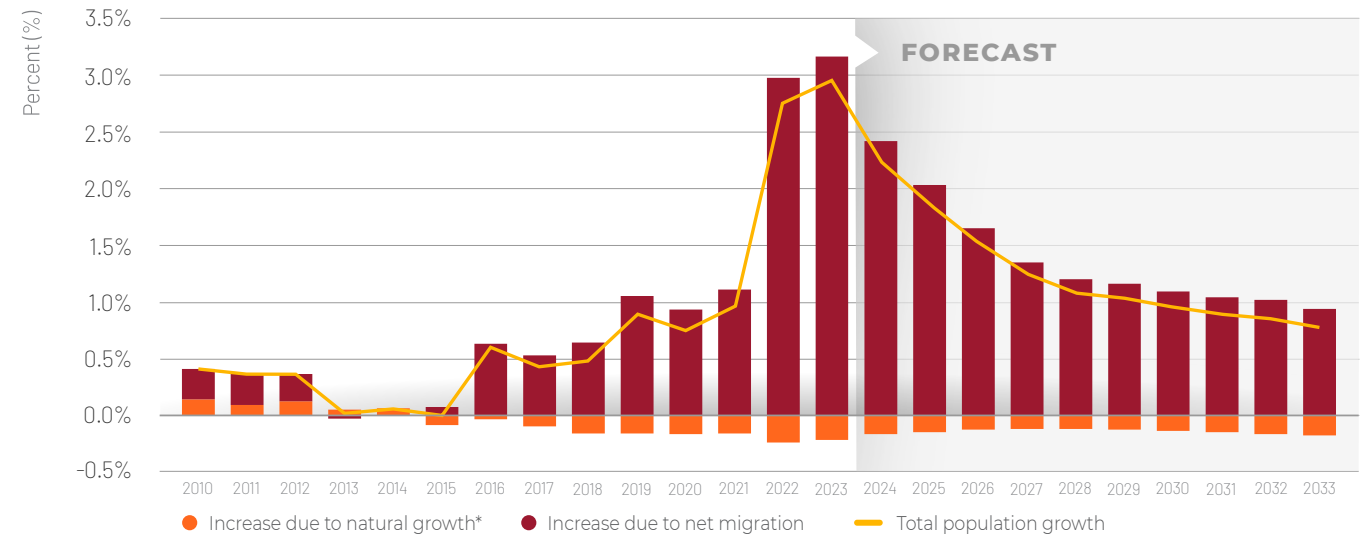
Figure 3 shows the various factors affecting population growth in New Brunswick over the forecast period.

Figure 2: Population age distribution, New Brunswick



Source: BuildForce Canada

Figure 3: Sources of population growth (%), New Brunswick



* Natural rate of population growth refers to the growth in the population due to the number of births relative to the number of deaths, which leads to a positive or negative natural rate.

Source: Statistics Canada, BuildForce Canada (2024-2033)

SECTOR INSIGHTS

The following sections provide sector-specific insights into the provincial residential and non-residential labour markets.

The BuildForce LMI system tracks supply and accounts for the change in the available labour force, including retirements, new entrants¹, and net mobility². For New Brunswick, rankings are reported for 17 residential and 24 non-residential trades and occupations.

¹ **New entrants** are measured by applying the traditional proportion of the provincial labour force that enters the construction industry. The projected estimate across the forecast period assumes that the construction industry can recruit this group in competition with other industries.

² **Net mobility** refers to the movement of labour in and out of the local construction industry labour force. In-mobility captures the movement into the labour force of out-of-province industry workers and/or workers from outside the industry. Many members of this group will move quickly out of the provincial labour force as work declines, referred to as out-mobility.

RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

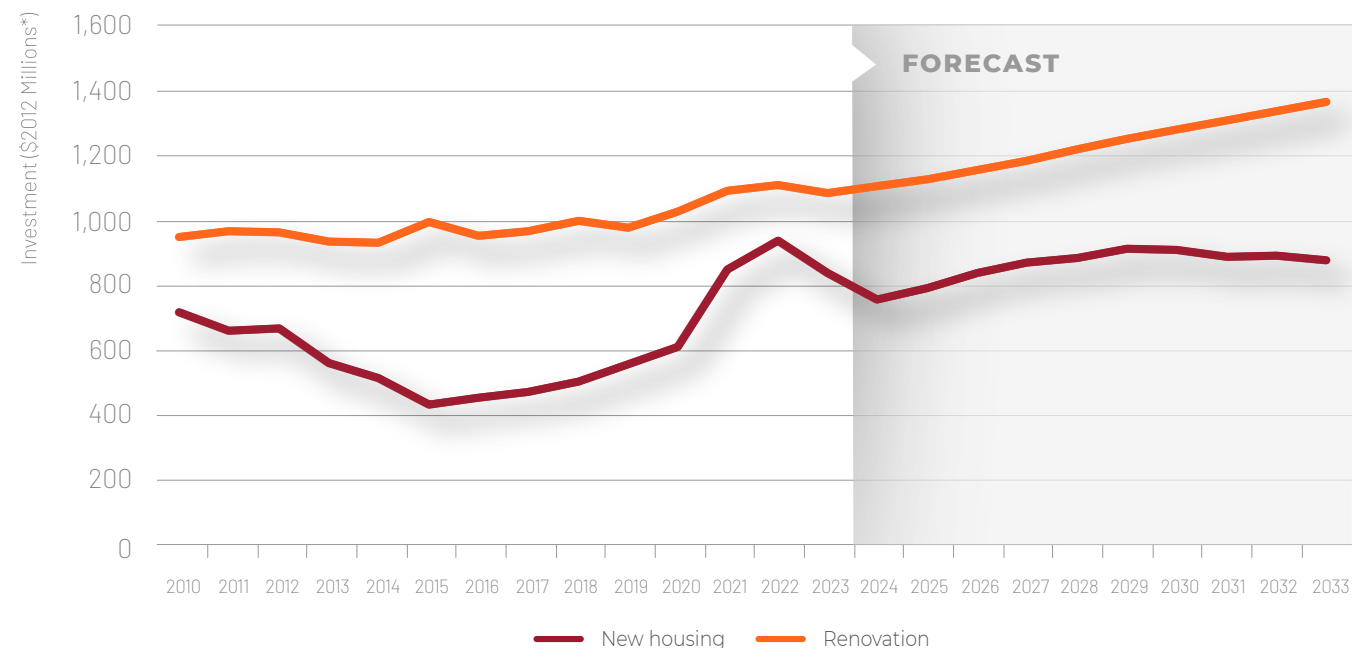
New Brunswick’s residential sector has benefitted in recent years from elevated numbers of individuals migrating to the province. Household formation has been generally trending upward since 2015, and rose sharply in 2022 and 2023 with an influx of permanent and non-permanent residents. These trends, combined with historically low interest rates, resulted in elevated housing starts to a new peak of nearly 4,700 units in 2022.

Although household formation surged again in 2023 with the arrival of even more permanent and non-permanent residents, housing starts stepped down in response to interest rate pressures. Starts are expected to contract again in 2024, although modestly, before they return to growth through 2029. Of note is the effect of interest rate pressures on the market for single-detached housing. As recently as 2018, these unit types comprised 50% of total housing starts in the province. In 2023, their share of total housing starts was down to 30%. By 2025, they are projected to account for just 27%. In later years, they stabilize at between 30% and 40%. Interest rate pressures have increased demand for multi-family units. So too has immigration, as newcomers tend to rent housing before they buy.

Single-detached housing starts are projected to contract to a low of 970 units in 2024 before rising almost continuously across the remainder of the forecast period. Multi-family units will follow almost the opposite trend, rising to an elevated level in 2025 before declining gradually to 2033. Renovation activity, meanwhile, is projected to rise steadily throughout the 10-year outlook.

Figure 4 shows the anticipated renovation and new-housing investment trends for residential construction.

Figure 4: Residential construction investment, New Brunswick



* \$2012 millions indicates that the investment values are in year 2012 dollars (base year), that is, adjusted for inflation. This is used to calculate the real physical year-to-year change of the value of construction, factoring out growth (increase in value) due to increases in prices.

Source: Statistics Canada, BuildForce Canada (2024-2033)

Residential construction employment reached a recent peak of nearly 13,000 workers in 2022, driven by strong demand for new housing and renovation work. Employment stepped down in 2023 with the effects of rising interest rates on both. A further weakening is projected for 2024 before the outlook calls for employment to rise strongly into 2030 as housing starts return to growth and renovation demands remain elevated.

By the end of the decade, employment is projected to be 8% higher than 2023 levels. Although employment in new housing rises strongly through to 2029 (+7%), it ends the forecast period at 2% below 2023 levels. The impact on overall employment is entirely offset by rising employment levels in both the renovation (+14%) and maintenance (+15%) sectors. By 2033, overall residential employment is projected to be 8% higher than 2023 levels.

Table 1 summarizes the estimated percent change in residential employment by sector across three periods: the short term (2024–2026), the medium term (2027–2029), and the long term (2030–2033).

This analysis presents a business-as-usual scenario. It does not take into account public-sector initiatives to address housing affordability challenges.

Table 1: Changes in residential employment by sector, New Brunswick

SECTOR	% CHANGE 2024-2026	% CHANGE 2027-2029	% CHANGE 2030-2033
Total residential employment	3%	5%	0%
New housing	1%	6%	-8%
Renovations	3%	5%	5%
Residential maintenance	4%	4%	5%

Source: Statistics Canada, BuildForce Canada (2024-2033)



Residential rankings, risks, and mobility

The provincial residential labour market experienced challenging conditions in 2022 with growth in both new-housing and renovation demands. As Table 2 shows, pressures eased in many trades and occupations in 2023 as housing starts contracted. Steady levels of renovation activity also maintained pressure on key trades and occupations.

Labour markets are expected to mostly return to balance in 2024 before they tighten again in 2025 with a return to growth in new-housing construction and as renovation activity remains on a strong upward curve.

MARKET RANKINGS

- 1 Workers meeting employer qualifications are available in local markets to meet an increase in demand at the current offered rate of compensation and other current working conditions. Excess supply is apparent and there is a risk of losing workers to other markets.
- 2 Workers meeting employer qualifications are available in local markets to meet an increase in demand at the current offered rate of compensation and other working conditions.
- 3 The availability of workers meeting employer qualifications in the local market may be limited by large projects, plant shutdowns or other short-term increases in demand. Employers may need to compete to attract needed workers. Establish patterns of recruiting and mobility are sufficient to meet job requirements.
- 4 Workers meeting qualifications are generally not available in local markets to meet any increase. Employers will need to compete to attract additional workers. Recruiting and mobility may extend beyond traditional sources and practices.
- 5 Needed workers meeting employer qualifications are not available in local markets to meet current demand so that projects or production may be delayed or deferred. There is excess demand, competition is intense and recruiting reaches to remote markets.

Table 2: Residential market rankings, New Brunswick

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS — RESIDENTIAL	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Bricklayers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Carpenters	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction estimators	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction managers	3	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
Contractors and supervisors	4	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Electricians	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Floor covering installers	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Heavy equipment operators (except crane)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Home building and renovation managers	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Painters and decorators (except interior decorators)	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plasterers, drywall installers and finishers, and lathers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plumbers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Residential and commercial installers and servicers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Roofers and shinglers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sheet metal workers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Trades helpers and labourers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Truck drivers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

Source: BuildForce Canada

NON-RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

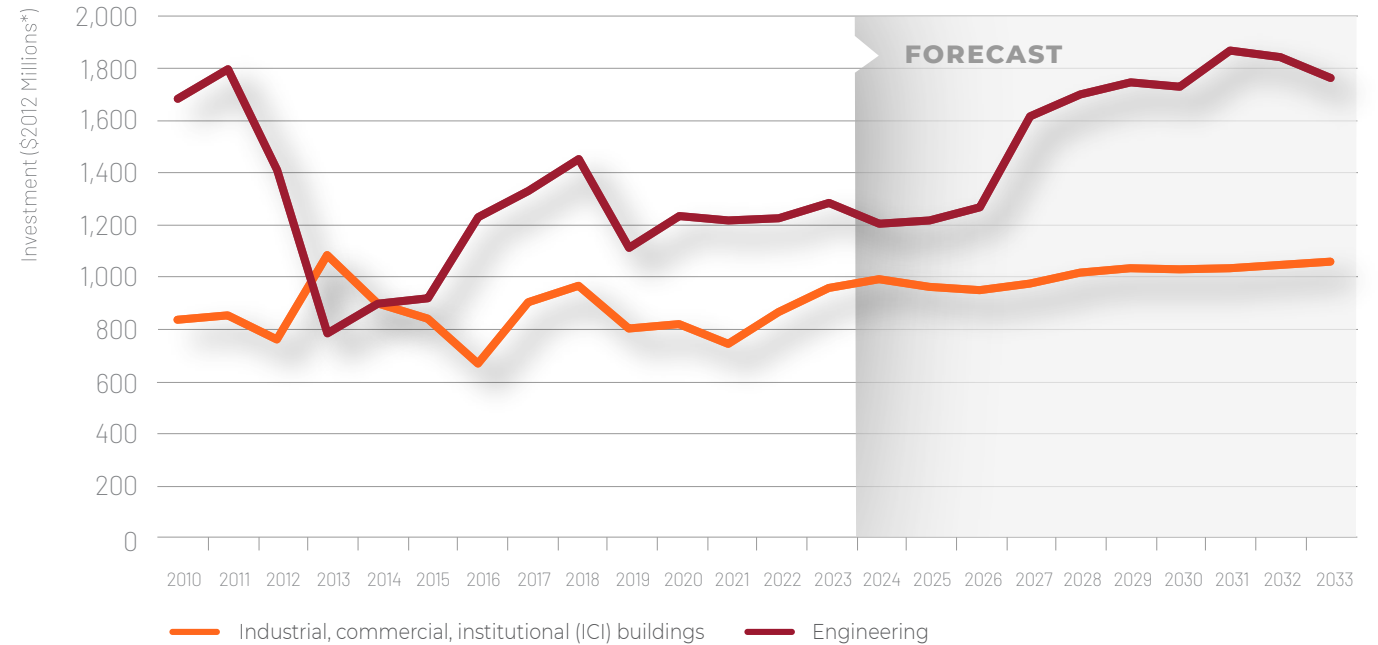
NON-RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

As Figure 5 shows, investment levels in New Brunswick’s non-residential sector have been generally trending upward since 2019, on the strength of strong activity in both the engineering-construction and industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) building construction segments. Activity in the former has been driven in recent years by investments in wastewater projects, wind farms, and roads, highways, and bridges projects, while the latter has been supported by strong activity in institutional and government building projects.

The outlook calls for ICI-building investment to rise again in 2024 with the development of new education and healthcare projects and continued gains in commercial building construction. The segment is projected to cycle down slightly in 2025 and 2026 with the conclusion of several major institutional and government projects. Later years see growth resume across all building types, with output tied to population growth.

Engineering-construction activity is expected to contract into 2024 with the completion of major wastewater projects, wind energy projects, and road, highways, and bridges work. NB Power’s capital plan is projected to increase utilities spending into 2026, after which the start of the Mactaquac Dam project in 2027 elevates investment to new highs through to the end of the decade.

Figure 5: Non-residential construction investment, New Brunswick



* \$2012 millions indicates that the investment values are in year 2012 dollars (base year), that is, adjusted for inflation. This is used to calculate the real physical year-to-year change of the value of construction, factoring out growth (increase in value) due to increases in prices.

Source: Statistics Canada, BuildForce Canada (2024-2033)

Non-residential construction employment is projected to grow by 10% over 2023 levels by 2033. Although it moderates in the early years of the forecast with the conclusion of several major projects, the start of work on the Mactaquac Dam raises employment significantly, and in the engineering-construction segment in particular, which increases 24% over 2023 levels. ICI building construction employment rises by 8% while maintenance employment contracts by 8%.

Table 3 summarizes the estimated percent change in non-residential employment by sector across three periods: the short term (2024–2026), the medium term (2027–2029), and the long term (2030–2033).

“Non-residential construction employment is projected to grow by 10% over 2023 levels by 2033.”

Table 3: Changes in non-residential employment by sector, New Brunswick

SECTOR	% CHANGE 2024-2026	% CHANGE 2027-2029	% CHANGE 2030-2033
Total non-residential employment	-4%	10%	4%
Industrial buildings	-9%	16%	10%
Commercial and institutional buildings	1%	4%	1%
Heavy industrial	-1%	63%	10%
Other engineering	5%	7%	1%
Roads, highways and bridges	-5%	1%	-2%
Non-residential maintenance	-12%	-1%	6%

Source: Statistics Canada, BuildForce Canada (2024-2033)

Non-residential rankings, risks, and mobility

As Table 4 shows, labour market pressures were strained across almost all non-residential trades and occupations in New Brunswick in 2023. Challenges were greatest among those working in the construction of industrial, commercial, and institutional buildings.

Market pressures are projected to ease in 2024 and 2025 with the completion of several major

healthcare, education, and utilities projects. Pressures intensify among engineering-construction trades and occupations in 2027 and beyond with the start of work on the Mactaquac Hydro Dam Replacement project in 2027.

Table 4: Non-residential market rankings, New Brunswick

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS — NON-RESIDENTIAL	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Boilermakers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3
Bricklayers	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Carpenters	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction estimators	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3
Construction managers	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	3
Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	3
Contractors and supervisors	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	3
Crane operators	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
Electricians	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	3
Heavy equipment operators (except crane)	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
Heavy-duty equipment mechanics	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Insulators	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS — NON-RESIDENTIAL	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Ironworkers and structural metal fabricators	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Painters and decorators (except interior decorators)	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plasterers, drywall installers and finishers, and lathers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plumbers	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	3
Refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Residential and commercial installers and servicers	4	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Roofers and shinglers	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sheet metal workers	4	3	2	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	3
Steamfitters, pipefitters and sprinkler system installers	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	3
Trades helpers and labourers	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3
Truck drivers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Welders and related machine operators	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

Source: BuildForce Canada

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE LABOUR FORCE

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE LABOUR FORCE

The available labour force

New Brunswick's construction industry will need to recruit about 9,200 additional workers over the forecast period to keep pace with labour force growth and replace approximately 6,100 retiring workers, or 21% of the current labour force.

Many of these hiring requirements may be met by an estimated 6,000 first-time new entrants under the age of 30 from the local population, leaving a gap of about 3,200 workers that will need to be recruited from outside the local construction labour force.

Keeping pace with recruitment and training will require a combination of strategies, including maintaining local recruitment and training efforts, particularly from groups traditionally under-represented in the construction labour force, the hiring of workers from other industries with the required skills sets, and the recruitment of immigrants to Canada with skilled trades training and/or construction experience.

Figure 6 provides a summary of the estimated changes in the construction labour force across the forecast period.

Figure 6: Changes in the construction labour force, New Brunswick



* **Net mobility** refers to the number of workers needed to be brought into the industry from other industries or other provinces to meet rising demands or the number of workers that exit the industry in downturns. Positive net mobility means that industry must attract workers, while negative net mobility arises from an excess supply of workers in the local construction labour force.

Note: Due to rounding, numbers may not add up to the totals indicated.

Source: BuildForce Canada

Labour Force Diversification

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is a key source of labour for the construction industry. New Brunswick has seen fluctuations in registration levels in the 16 largest trade programs over recent years. New registrations declined by approximately 7% from 2010 to 2019, while trade employment declined at a slightly slower pace of 4% over the same period. In 2022, new registrations increased to a level not seen since 2008. This increase was driven primarily by record or near-record new registrations in carpenter and refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic trade programs. Completions have been slower to recover, remaining below pre-pandemic levels in 2022. (See Figure 7.)

Select trades, namely boilermaker, bricklayer, carpenter, plumber, sprinkler system installer, and sheet metal worker, have seen notable declines in new registrations over the past decade. The decline in new registrations in these trades may pose a risk of an insufficient number of newly certified journeypersons to sustain workforce requirements.

Figure 7: New apprentice registrations, completions, and trade employment, New Brunswick



Table 5 provides a trade-by-trade breakdown of the anticipated certification requirements to meet the construction industry’s share of employment and replacement demand over the scenario period. Based on projected new registrations, several trades are at risk of undersupplying the number of new journeypersons required by 2033. Trades within this group include sprinkler fitter, carpenter, metal fabricator (fitter), steamfitter/pipefitter, and welder.

“Completions have been slower to recover, remaining below pre-pandemic levels in 2022.”

Table 5: Estimated construction certification demand and projected completions by trade, 2024 to 2033³

TRADE	Target certification demand — construction	Target new registrants — construction	Apprentice certification supply risk — all industries	TRADE	Target certification demand — construction	Target new registrants — construction	Apprentice certification supply risk — all industries
Sprinkler Fitter	27	8	●	Sheet Metal Worker	37	53	●
Carpenter	1,177	529	●	Industrial Electrician	93	134	●
Metal Fabricator (Fitter)	57	38	●	Industrial Mechanic (Millwright)	65	98	●
Steamfitter/Pipefitter	108	78	●	Plumber	274	424	●
Welder	90	66	●	Roofer	9	33	●
Hoist Operator (Boom Truck)	93	78	●	Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic	76	281	●
Boilermaker	100	95	●				
Construction Electrician	855	861	●				
Heavy-Duty Equipment Technician	62	66	●				
Bricklayer	41	47	●				

- Certifications required exceed projected completions
- Certifications required in line with projected completions
- Projected completions exceed certifications required

Source: BuildForce Canada

³ This analysis does not account for an existing skills mismatch at the 2023 starting point.

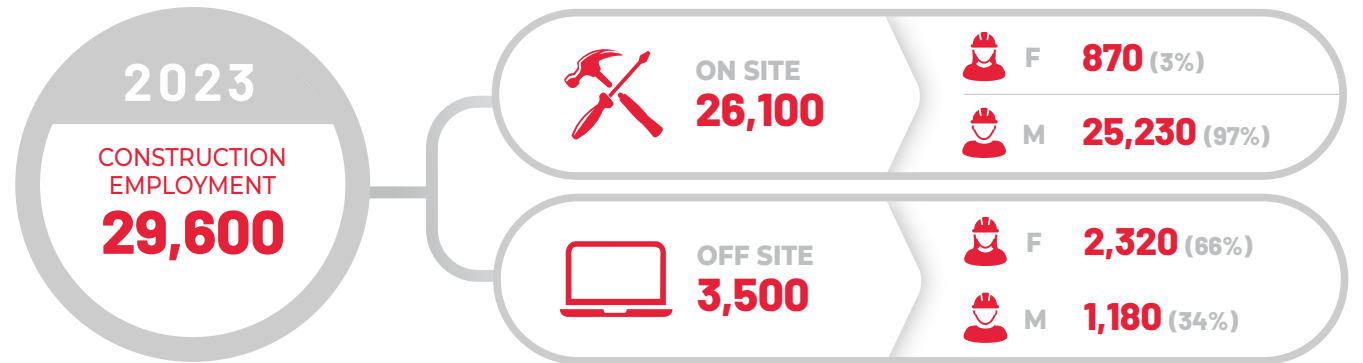
Under-represented groups of workers

Due in part to lower fertility rates and smaller family sizes in Canada for more than three decades, the share of younger Canadians available to enter the labour force has been in decline for several years. As the baby boomer generation of workers commences retirement over the next decade, the competition for younger workers will be intense. To help mitigate the impact of this shift in demographics, the construction industry must diversify its recruitment. In order to succeed, the industry must increase recruitment of individuals from groups traditionally underrepresented in the current construction labour force, including women, Indigenous People, and newcomers.

In 2023, there were approximately 3,200 women employed in New Brunswick's construction industry, of which 27% worked on site, directly on construction projects, while the remaining 73% worked off site, primarily in administrative and management-related occupations. Of the 26,100 tradespeople employed in the industry, women made up only 3% (see Figure 8).

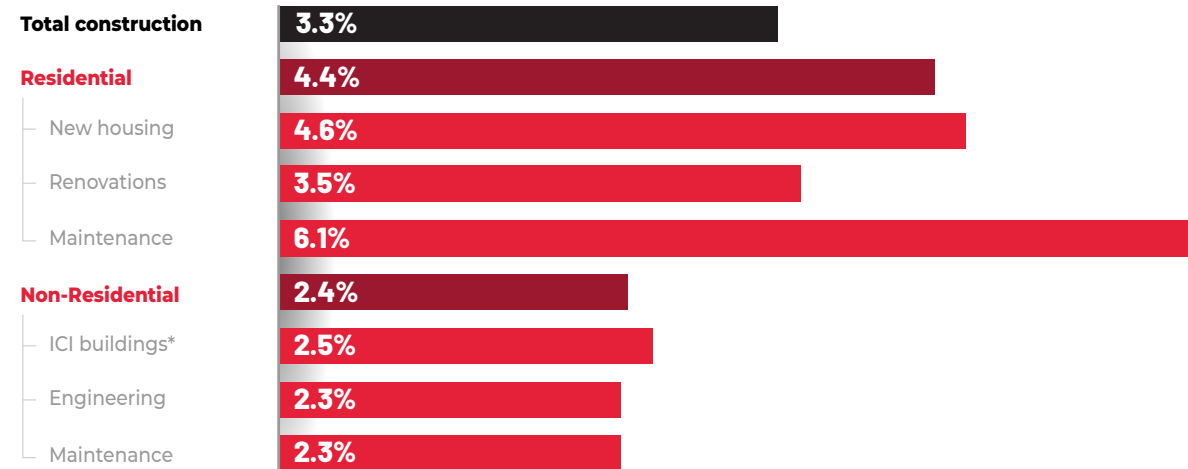
The estimated 870 tradeswomen in New Brunswick are represented across all sectors of construction, but given the nature of construction work in the province, women account for a higher share of total tradespeople (4.4%) in residential construction. Across sectors, residential maintenance construction has the highest representation of women, accounting for 6.1% of the workforce (see Figure 9). The top five trades and occupations in which women tend to be employed are trade helpers and labourers (31% of all tradeswomen), painters and decorators (20%), construction managers (8%), contractors and supervisors (7%), and carpenters (7%).

Figure 8: Detailed construction employment by gender, New Brunswick, 2023



Source: BuildForce Canada calculations based on Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS) and 2016 Census of the Population.

Figure 9: Women's share of total direct trades and occupations (on site), New Brunswick



*Industrial, commercial, institutional

Source: BuildForce Canada calculations based on Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS) and 2016 Census of the Population.

The Indigenous population is the fastest growing population in Canada and therefore presents recruitment opportunities for New Brunswick's construction industry. In 2021, Indigenous People accounted for approximately 3.7% of the province's construction labour force, approximately a half-percentage-point increase from the levels observed in 2016.⁴ This share is slightly below the share of Indigenous People represented in the overall labour force (see Table 6). As the Indigenous population continues to expand, recruitment efforts will need to be dedicated to increasing the industry's share of the population into the labour force.

New Brunswick's construction industry may also leverage newcomers (immigrants) to Canada over the forecast period to meet labour requirements. Due to the declining natural rates of population growth, immigrants are the sole source of labour force growth in the province. Immigrants have been playing an increasingly important role in replenishing the workforce, with the share of immigrants in the workforce doubling from 4% in 2012 to 8% in 2022. While the province has been successful in attracting and integrating immigrants into the labour force, the province's share of immigrants is notably below the share in Canada overall (See Figure 10). The construction labour force share of immigrants was 5% in 2022, which is significantly lower than the share in Canada's construction industry.⁵

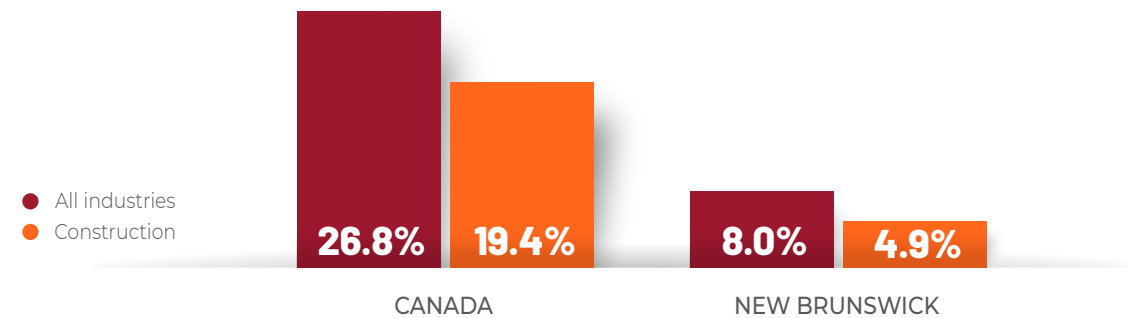
Based on historical settlement patterns, the province is expected to welcome more than 122,900 permanent and non-permanent residents between 2024 and 2033. As these individuals will make up an increasing share of the province's core working-age population, additional recruitment efforts will be required to ensure the construction industry recruits its share of newcomers into the labour force.

Table 6: Representation of Indigenous population in New Brunswick's construction workforce

SECTOR	YEAR	INDIGENOUS	NON-INDIGENOUS	TOTAL	INDIGENOUS SHARE OF TOTAL WORKFORCE, %
Construction	2016	920	26,870	27,790	3.3%
	2021	1,030	26,775	27,800	3.7%
All Industries	2016	13,145	361,325	374,470	3.5%
	2021	14,860	366,645	381,500	3.9%

Source: BuildForce Canada calculations based on Statistics Canada's 2021 and 2016 Census of the Population

Figure 10: Share (%) of immigrants in the construction labour force, 2022, New Brunswick



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0083-01 Labour force characteristics by immigrant status, annual

⁴ Statistics Canada, 2021 Census. Custom Data Request.

⁵ Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Custom Data Request 2022.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

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The 2024–2033 *Construction and Maintenance Looking Forward* scenario for New Brunswick sees long-term growth in both the residential and non-residential construction sectors.

With interest rates expected to remain elevated in the short term, the outlook for the province’s residential sector is muted. Housing starts in particular have been affected by affordability issues. The sector returns to growth between 2025 and 2029, driven by strong levels of immigration. Demand for single-detached housing rebounds strongly over this period and through to the end of the decade; renovation activity also rises steadily across the forecast period.

Activity in the non-residential sector is also projected to be muted in the short term. Investment enters the forecast period at an elevated level, but contracts with the completion of several key engineering construction and institutional and government buildings projects. The start of the Mactaquac Hydro Dam Replacement in 2027, combined with a number of health care projects, will elevate employment demands to the end of the forecast period.

While growth is projected across the forecast period, the industry must remain focused on attracting, training, and retaining 9,200 workers between 2024 and 2033. Addressing this gap will require a combination of strategies that include enhanced local recruitment and training, including the increased recruitment of permanent residents and newly arrived immigrants, and promoting career opportunities to workers with comparable skill sets who have been displaced from other industries.

The industry scenario-based approach developed by BuildForce Canada to assess future labour market conditions provides a powerful planning tool for industry, government, and other stakeholders to better track labour market conditions and identify potential pressure points. The anticipated labour market conditions reflect current industry expectations of population growth and the timing of major projects. Any changes to these assumptions present risks and potentially alter anticipated labour market conditions.



ABOUT THE BUILDFORCE CANADA LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEM

BuildForce Canada's labour market information (LMI) system uses the most advanced and detailed industry model available in Canada to produce a forecast scenario that reflects current and future labour demand and supply information for the residential and non-residential construction sectors, by province.

Updated annually, the system is calibrated to the latest information on global, national, and provincial economic conditions derived from various data sources including Statistics Canada, Canadian financial institutions, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and federal and provincial budget plans. Key factors driving the outlook scenario include: economic environment measures such as real GDP growth, inflation, interest rates, exchange rates, commodity prices, and international trading partner trends, and population growth and demographic trends.

Unique to the BuildForce system is the integration of a major projects inventory. This is developed in partnership with provincial LMI committees – networks of industry stakeholders that include labour groups, construction associations, owners, and federal/provincial government departments – and identifies key projects that may distort construction investment trends and market conditions.

Information on economics, demographics, and major projects are combined into a dynamic, multi-sector and multi-factor macroeconomic model to generate a 10-year labour market outlook scenario for the residential and non-residential construction sectors in each Canadian province.

The system incorporates coefficients derived from Statistics Canada's input-output tables to determine industry demands and proprietary coefficients developed by BuildForce Canada to translate residential and non-residential investment data into labour demands for the 34 most common on-site trades and occupations in the construction sector. These account for 75% of the total construction labour force.

For labour supply, the system utilizes Statistics Canada's 2021 Census of Population as a starting point. That data is adjusted to reflect current public-policy and demand factors, and is further refined through consultation with the provincial LMI committees to produce measures of provincial economic and population growth, employment growth, retirements, new entrants to the labour force, and interprovincial and international migration patterns.

Provincial residential and non-residential labour market conditions, by trade and occupation, are assessed based on changes in supply and demand and summarized in the form of tables. For each year, conditions are ranked from a low of 1 (in which excess labour supply is apparent, and there is a risk of losing workers to other markets) to a high of 5 (in which there is excess demand, competition is intense, and recruiting extends beyond local labour markets). Ranks are calculated based on annual employment growth, natural or normal unemployment rates, and changes in supply (i.e., retirements, new entrants, and mobility requirements to meet demands).

Rankings for some trades or occupations may be suppressed in some provinces and regions due to the small size of the workforce (i.e., fewer than 100 workers) and limited statistical reliability when assessing labour market conditions at the sector level. Some trades are also excluded because they typically do not work in the sector being assessed (e.g., boilermakers and millwrights typically do not work in residential construction, nor do homebuilding and renovation managers work in non-residential construction).

Finally, to further improve the robustness of the system, BuildForce Canada's outlook scenario is validated by provincial LMI committees.

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- ➔ Key economic indicators, construction investment and labour market conditions by province and/or sector
- ➔ Macroeconomic and investment data



Timely construction forecast data is available online at [constructionforecasts.ca](https://www.constructionforecasts.ca). Create customized reports on a broad range of selected categories within sector, trade or province covering up to 10 years.

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