

A statistical profile of the 2,700 professional artists in New Brunswick in 2021

Francophones represent 32% of New Brunswick’s artists, tied with Quebec for the highest minority-language percentage among the provinces

Using custom data that Hill Strategies requested from Statistics Canada’s 2021 long-form census, this article examines the demographics, employment characteristics, and incomes of artists in New Brunswick, as well as summary information about workers in arts leadership occupations and all occupations in the arts, culture, and heritage (a category that includes artists and arts leaders).



This article was created as part of [a larger project that is investigating the impacts and post-pandemic challenges of the arts and culture in New Brunswick](#). The overall project includes a survey of cultural venues (now in the data analysis phase), interviews with operators of cultural venues (in progress), and analysis of census and other data on the arts and culture in the province (including this report).

The research will produce results that will inform the province’s arts, culture, and heritage sector for the next decade, and there is no other thorough source regarding the current challenges and importance of New Brunswick’s cultural venues.

The project’s partners will use the survey results to further their information sharing, policy, and advocacy activities for the betterment of the sector as a whole. The partners are ArtsLink NB, Association acadienne des artistes professionnel.le.s du Nouveau-Brunswick (AAAPNB), and the Owens Art Gallery at Mount Allison University. The project is steered by a committee including Julie Whitenect of ArtsLink NB, Carmen Gibbs and Laurence Dubuc of AAAPNB, Emily Falvey of the Owens Art Gallery, and artist Emma Hassencahl-Perley.



The project is supported by the Canada Council for the Arts and The Government of New Brunswick.

Professional artists in New Brunswick

2,700 artists

57% are women

32% are
Francophones

Median personal
income is 39%
lower than other
N.B. workers

Source: Hill Strategies analysis of 2021 census data, available at statsinsights.ca

Methods and occupational categories

The analysis relates to professional workers, but with a very specific concept of professional. The census data on occupations include people who **worked more hours** as an artist than at any other occupation between May 1 and 8, 2021, **plus** people who were not in the labour force at that time but had **worked more as an artist than at another occupation between January of 2020 and May of 2021**. Part-time artists who spent more time at another occupation in May of 2021 would be classified in the other occupation. (The same would be true of workers in arts leadership occupations and all cultural occupations.)

“Gig work” has been common among artists for a very long time. Internet sources even indicate that the term “gig” was coined by jazz musicians in the early 1900s. (Source examples [here](#) and [here](#).) The atypical nature of artists’ workflows can make it challenging for official statistics to count artists as artists. As such, census estimates of the number of artists might be low. In addition, the census does not ask about some topics of particular interest in the arts community, such as secondary jobs or hours worked.

The occupational perspective counts people who work across the economy, as long as they are classified into one of 10 artist occupation groups, 5 arts leadership occupation groups, or 52 cultural occupation groups. Details about [the occupation groups included in each of the categories](#) is available in a recent article, which also outlined the [methods behind choosing the 52 cultural occupation groups](#). Another article highlighted some [strengths and limitations of the census for counting artists and cultural workers](#).

To ensure confidentiality and data reliability, no estimates of fewer than 40 people are presented in this article.

The [challenging context of the pandemic in the spring of 2021](#) is important to keep in mind when interpreting census data on artists, which were collected in May of 2021. Income data from the census relate to the 2020 calendar year.

Context: Canada-wide data

Across Canada, there are 202,900 professional artists, representing 1.0% of the Canadian labour force. Examined differently, this means that 1 in every 102 Canadian workers is an artist. ([A full article on Canadian artists is available here.](#))

A similar analysis examines workers in [arts leadership occupations in Canada](#). There are more than 56,000 Canadian workers in five occupation groups, which include individual occupations such as producers, directors, choreographers, conductors, composers, curators, conservators, and arts and heritage managers. Two of the arts leadership occupations (those including conductors and composers as well as producers, directors, and choreographers) are also included as artists. As such, the number of arts leadership workers should not be added to the number of artists.

The broadest analysis relates to the [914,000 workers in arts, culture, and heritage occupations](#), representing 4.4% of all Canadian workers. The 52 occupation groups in this category include the [10 artist occupation groups](#) as well as the [5 arts leadership occupation groups](#), other cultural occupations (e.g., graphic designers, print operators, editors, translators, architects, and professionals in fundraising, advertising, marketing, and public relations), and heritage occupations (e.g., librarians, curators, and archivists).

2,700 professional artists in New Brunswick

The 2,700 professional artists in New Brunswick represent 0.6% of the provincial labour force, a percentage that is much lower than the national average (1.0%). In N.B., one out of every 158 people who work is an artist.

The province is home to 1.3% of all professional artists in Canada, lower than the province's share of the overall Canadian labour force (2.1%).

There are 850 Francophone artists in New Brunswick, accounting for 32% of all artists in the province, which is tied with Quebec for the highest minority-language percentage among the provinces. Minority-language workers are defined by the [potential demand for federal communications and services in the minority official language](#). This fairly broad definition includes people outside Quebec whose mother tongue is French and/or who speak French at home, either most often or as a secondary language. In total, there are 1.4 million people outside Quebec who could potentially request federal services in French, including 256,300 in New Brunswick.

Artists are much more likely to be immigrants to Canada than other workers in New Brunswick.

Artists in New Brunswick have high education levels and a very high self-employment rate

Among N.B. artists:

- 57% are women ([including some transgender and non-binary people](#)), much higher than the proportion of all N.B. workers (48%) and slightly higher than that of all Canadian artists (54%).
- 30% have a child at home, lower than the percentage of all N.B. workers (38%) but similar to that of all Canadian artists (31%).
- 32% are French speakers (i.e., [official language minority](#)), similar to the percentage of all N.B. workers (34%) and much higher than official language minority speakers' proportion of all Canadian artists (11%). The minority-language percentage in N.B. is tied with Quebec for the highest such percentage among the provinces.
- 5% are Indigenous, slightly above the proportions of all N.B. workers (4%) and all Canadian artists (4%).
- 5% are members of racialized groups, similar to the percentage of all N.B. workers (6%) but much lower than that of all Canadian artists (19%).
- 13% are immigrants to Canada, much higher than the percentage of all N.B. workers (6%) but much lower than that of all Canadian artists (21%).
- 41% have a bachelor's degree or higher, nearly double the percentage of all N.B. workers (23%) but somewhat lower than that of all Canadian artists (45%).
- 36% are 55 years of age or older, higher than the proportions of all N.B. workers (27%) and all Canadian artists (28%).
- 58% are self-employed, nearly six times higher than the percentage of all N.B. workers (10%) but lower than that of all Canadian artists (68%).
- 41% reside in the province's three largest cities (Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John), compared with 28% of all N.B. workers.
- 41% reside in rural areas and another 15% reside in areas with populations under 30,000 (but which are not considered rural).

For the first time, the 2021 census collected information on transgender and non-binary residents. For artists, this information is only available for the four Atlantic provinces as a group. In the Atlantic region, there are about 60 transgender and 110 non-binary artists. Combined, trans and non-binary artists represent 1.6% of all Atlantic artists, higher than the national average of 1.2%. More information about the strengths and limitations of these gender statistics [is available here](#).

There are as many artists in rural areas of New Brunswick as there are in the province's three largest cities combined.

Professional artists had very low incomes in 2020

The financial analysis in this article focuses on median incomes, which are believed to provide a better indication of the typical situation of professional artists than the average (i.e., the “mean”), a statistic that is more strongly affected by a few individuals with very high incomes.

Three measurements of artists’ incomes are provided here: median employment income, median personal income, and median household income. Employment income shows the work-related earnings of artists; personal income includes all sources of income (including pandemic supports); and household income provides a measure of the family situation of artists.

It should be kept in mind that the income statistics from the 2021 census relate to the 2020 calendar year, which included many pandemic related lockdowns and significant slowdowns in artistic activity.

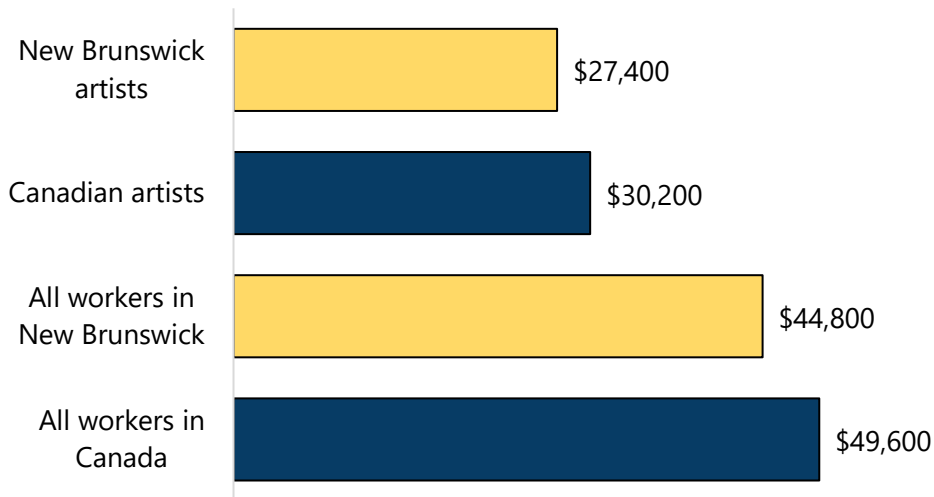
The income statistics indicate that artists in New Brunswick operate at a significant financial disadvantage, with personal incomes that are 39% lower than other workers. That disadvantage carries over into household incomes that are 19% lower than other workers.

The median employment income of N.B. artists was just \$8,500 in 2020, which is about one-quarter of the median employment income of all N.B. workers (\$35,600). The median employment income of artists in the province is 27% lower than the median of all Canadian artists (\$11,700).

The median personal income of artists (from all sources) was \$27,400 in 2020, 39% below that of all New Brunswick workers (\$44,800) and 9% below the median of all Canadian artists (\$30,200). The graph below shows the median personal incomes of artists and all workers in N.B. and Canada.

In 2020, the median household income of artists was \$82,000, 19% lower than that of all workers in N.B. (\$101,000) and 12% lower than the median of all Canadian artists (\$93,000).

Median personal incomes of professional artists and all workers in New Brunswick and Canada, 2020



*Note: Personal incomes include all sources for an individual during the 2020 calendar year.
Source: 2021 census, custom data request by Hill Strategies.*

N.B. artists by occupation and industry

New Brunswick is the only province where craftspeople are the largest artist occupation. In most provinces, musicians are the most common artist occupation, but that occupation is slightly outnumbered by craftspeople in New Brunswick. From most to least common, the occupation groups of the province's professional artists are:

- Artisans & craftspeople: 530 (20%)
- Musicians: 520 (19%)
- Writers: 360 (13%)
- Painters, sculptors & other visual artists: 290 (11%)
- Producers, directors, choreographers & related occupations: 280 (10%)
- Photographers: 270 (10%)
- Dancers: 180 (7%)
- Actors, comedians & circus performers: 130 (5%)
- Conductors, composers & arrangers: 90 (3%)
- Other performers: 60 (2%)

For artists in the province, the largest industry sector is arts, entertainment, and recreation, which employs roughly one-third of them (32%). Within this sector, the largest number of artists work in the "independent artists, writers, and performers" group (22% of N.B. artists), followed by those who work directly in performing arts companies (7%).

The next-largest broad sectors are educational services (where 18% of N.B. artists are employed) and information and cultural industries (10%). The proportion of artists who work in information and cultural industries is one of the lowest in the country, ahead of only P.E.I. (9%).

Many N.B. artists work in other sectors of the economy: all other industries (excluding the three largest ones) employ 40% of artists. The percentage of artists who work in non-culture industries (40%) is the highest in the country, tied with P.E.I. This is undoubtedly related to the province's high proportion of craftspeople, many of whom work in industries such as manufacturing and retail trade that are classified outside of the arts and cultural industries.

Over 600 arts leaders

640 New Brunswickers work in the five occupation groups that are classified as arts leaders, with the broad grouping of producers, directors, and choreographers accounting for nearly one-half of them:

- Producers, directors, choreographers & related occupations: 280 (44% of the arts leaders in the province)
- Library, archive, museum & art gallery managers: 160 (26%)
- Conductors, composers & arrangers: 90 (13%)
- Managers in publishing, motion pictures, broadcasting & performing arts: 80 (12%)
- Conservators & curators: 40 (6%)

Of the 640 arts leaders, 220 (or 34%) are Francophones, equal to the Francophone percentage in the province's labour force.

N.B. accounts for 1.1% of Canada's arts leaders, which is below the province's share of all workers (2.1%).

More than 11,000 cultural workers in New Brunswick

The 11,300 workers in arts, culture, and heritage occupations in New Brunswick represent 2.7% of all 423,000 workers in the province, well below the national average of 4.4%. One out of every 37 workers in the province has a cultural occupation.

Cultural workers in New Brunswick account for 1.2% of all such workers in Canada, lower than the province's share of the overall labour force (2.1%).

In 2020, a typical cultural worker in N.B. had:

- Employment income of \$32,400, 9% less than all N.B. workers (\$35,600)
- Total personal income of \$42,800, 4% less than all workers in the province (\$44,800)
- Household income of \$95,000, 6% less than all workers (\$101,000)

Of the 11,300 cultural workers, 3,900, or 34% are Francophones. This proportion matches the percentage of Francophones in New Brunswick's labour force (34%). Both are the highest percentages of minority-language workers among the provinces.