

An aerial photograph of a small town nestled in a valley, surrounded by dense green forests. The sun is setting behind distant mountains, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. A road winds through the town, and a body of water is visible in the foreground. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic.

WHY DO WE LIVE HERE?

COMMUNITY

| OPPORTUNITY

| SUSTAINABILITY



MUNICIPAL SYMPOSIUM 2026 PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

GANDER, NL • MAY 7 - 9, 2026 • QUALITY HOTEL & SUITES



Municipalities

Newfoundland and Labrador

**Working to sustain the future
of our municipalities is the
most important thing we can
do.**



If I could
live anywhere,
why would I
choose
your town?



WHY DO
WE LIVE HERE?



In a recent totally
non-scientific poll,

74%

of respondents said they
actively CHOOSE to
live where they live



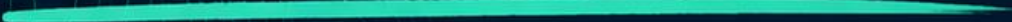
WHY DO
WE LIVE HERE?



If you had complete
freedom to live
anywhere in the world,

54%

said they
**would still live
where they do now.**



WHY DO
WE LIVE HERE?

People move to improve some part of their lives



25.3%

larger or better housing



19.2%

homeownership



13.5%

better neighbourhood



13.5%

household change



11.4%

forming a household



9.0%

closer to family

Statistics Canada found that housing, household formation, neighbourhood quality and family connection are major reasons Canadians move. For interprovincial movers, employment was the leading reason at 42.5%. Respondents could select more than one reason.

Source: Statistics Canada

WHY DO
WE LIVE HERE?



Newfoundland and Labrador, April 1, 2026



Population:

547,910



Births:

865



Deaths:

1,806



Natural population change:

minus 941



Net migration:

plus 294



Overall quarterly change:

minus 647

Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador population estimates.

WHY DO
WE LIVE HERE?

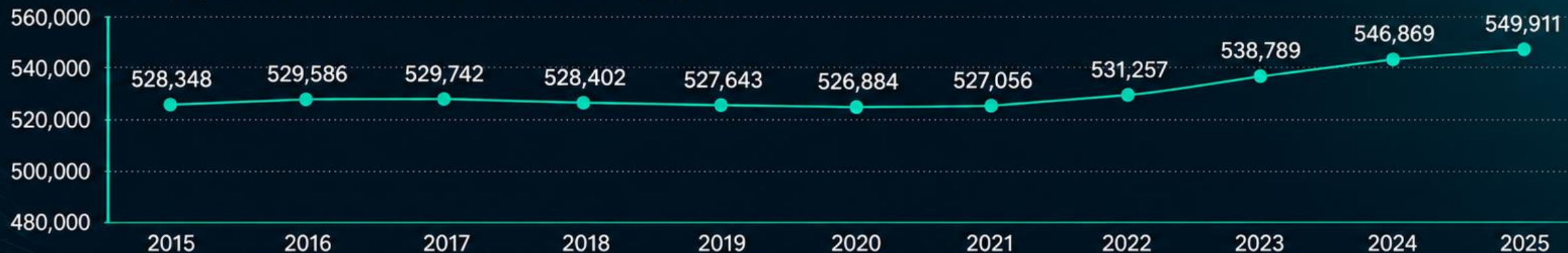
The population grew, but the population changed



+4.1%

total population growth,
2015 to 2025

Total population in Newfoundland and Labrador (July 1)



Ages 0 to 14

75,134 in 2015
67,749 in 2025



Down 9.8%



Ages 15 to 64

357,003 in 2015
343,648 in 2025



Down 3.7%



Ages 65 plus

96,211 in 2015
138,514 in 2025



Up 44.0%



The central issue is not only how many people live here, but who they are and what they need.



Where did the growth come from?



Natural change

-18,547

natural population change
over 10 annual periods



Migration from
other provinces

+4,545

net interprovincial gains
since 2020-21



This covers the most recent
5 years, not the full decade.



International migration

+37,758

net international migration
over 10 annual periods



Population growth has not come from births. It has come from people moving here, especially from outside the country.



100%

of Newfoundland and Labrador's
population growth in the last 10 years
has come from
people who have a choice

WHY DO
WE LIVE HERE?



Whether it's
remote workers,
young professionals,
newcomers
or retirees
looking to wind down,

we live in a time where people
have more **choice** of where to
live **than ever before**.



REMOTE
WORKERS



YOUNG
PROFESSIONALS



NEWCOMERS



RETIRES

WHY DO
WE LIVE HERE?

Remote Workers

Remote work is no longer a temporary experiment

Share of employed people in Canada who usually worked most of their hours from home.

2016 to 2025, Canada



Source: Statistics Canada, The Daily, August 26, 2025

WHY DO
WE LIVE HERE?



Remote work in Newfoundland and Labrador

In the 2021 Census, approximately **26,800** employed people in Newfoundland and Labrador worked at home.



2021 was a
pandemic census year.



26,785

employed people
worked from home

Approximately 26,800 employed people worked at home.



13%

of employed
people

About 13% of employed people worked from home.



Roughly
1 in 8

worked from home

That's roughly 1 in 8 employed people.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile, Newfoundland and Labrador



Workers still want flexibility



59%

of working-age Canadians would **prefer** to spend **most** of their working time **at home**, if possible.



76%

of people who have worked from home before or currently do would **prefer** to spend **most** of their working time **at home**.



This is **preference** survey data, not a count of remote-capable jobs.

Source: Angus Reid Institute, July 2025

The employer and the employee no longer have to be in the same province



179,000

Canadian employees working from home reported to a worksite in **another province**



87,000

reported to a worksite in **another country**



Source: Statistics Canada, Research to Insights: Working from home in Canada, January 2024

Remote work can be a **municipal growth tool**

Housing
Increased demand for
homes and rentals
strengthens the
local housing market.



School
More students support
stronger schools and
a vibrant education
community.



Local business
More customers and
spending support local
shops, services and
restaurants.



Taxes
Additional property and
consumption tax revenue
helps fund local services
and infrastructure.



Volunteering
More time and talents
strengthen community
organizations and events.



A remote worker can bring outside income
into a local economy **without requiring the
town to recruit the employer itself.**



They may also bring a **spouse, children,
housing demand, volunteer capacity and
community participation.**



THIS IS **POTENTIAL**, NOT A GUARANTEED OUTCOME.

Why are employers pulling people back?



Legitimate operational concerns



Collaboration



Training



Supervision



Service standards



Mentorship



Organizational habits



Office-based management habits

Decisions shaped by long-standing preferences for visibility, control and in-person oversight.



Existing property commitments

Long-term leases and investments in office space that organizations feel pressure to utilize.



Some return-to-office decisions are driven by **real operational needs**, while others reflect how organizations are **structured and what they have already invested in**.



It isn't only about culture. Real estate is part of the equation.

Organizations have leases, maintenance costs, security, parking, furniture and long-term capital investments.

Empty offices force organizations to question how those assets are being used.



Leases



Maintenance



Security



Parking



Furniture



Long-term
capital
investments



Physical office assets are **real commitments** that influence return-to-office decisions—alongside people, performance, and business strategy.

The provincial government example



The Provincial Government Example



**6.9 million
sq. ft.**

managed building space



865

buildings



**\$98.3
million**

2026-27 budgeted for
building operations and
accommodations



Estimated leased space

1.43 million sq. ft.

Estimate based on the published
April 2026 lease inventory.

The Building Operations branch manages approximately 640,000 square metres, or 6.9 million square feet, across about 865 buildings on 366 sites.



Source: 2026-27 Estimates, Transportation and Infrastructure.
Leased-space estimate from the published April 2026 portfolio inventory.



We proved that
work could move.
What if
opportunity
moved too?





Young Professionals





A vital population group

95,370

people aged 25 to 39 in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2025



25 to 29

30,986



30 to 34

31,291



35 to 39

33,093



This is the age range where many people are forming households, building careers, renting or buying homes, and becoming community leaders.



Source: Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0005-01.

We are still competing with other provinces for them



Net interprovincial migration,
ages 25 to 39, 2024 to 2025:

-518



25 to 29:

-317



30 to 34:

-156



35 to 39:

-45



Even among young adults in their prime household-forming and career-building years, Newfoundland and Labrador still saw a **net loss to other provinces** in 2024 to 2025.



Source: Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0015-01.



Jobs get them to look



59.1%

Among millennial households that moved between provinces, **employment** was cited by **59.1%**.



Career opportunity remains central
when people are deciding between provinces.



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Housing Survey 2022.



Housing helps them build a life



32.2%

larger or better housing



30.4%

homeownership



Among millennials who moved within a province, these were two of the **leading reasons for moving**.

Young professionals are looking for a **complete life**

A job alone is often not enough. A town can have work and still lose people if housing, social life, childcare or career progression is missing.



Statistics Canada also found that millennials aged 25 to 39 had **lower adjusted homeownership** than earlier generations at the same age.



Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Housing Survey 2022; Millennials in the Canadian housing market, 2026.



How towns can compete for young professionals



Make adulthood possible



attainable rentals
and starter homes



childcare
advocacy



active public
spaces



Make opportunity visible



remote-work
support



visible job and
business opportunities



social events that feel
comfortable for new people



Give young people influence



real roles in
committees and planning



space for
younger voices



pathways into
local leadership



Newcomers

IMMIGRATION IS CENTRAL TO POPULATION GROWTH



CANADA



23%

of Canada's population
in 2021 were immigrants



71.1%

of Canada's population
growth from 2016 to 2021
came from recent immigrants



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR



+37,758

net international migration
across the ten annual periods
in the population table



Sources: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population;
Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0008-01.



ATTRACTION IS NOT THE SAME AS **RETENTION**

Newfoundland and Labrador's five-year retention rate for immigrants admitted in 2017 was **45.6%**, one of the lowest provincial rates.



**Admission numbers mean
little if people do not remain.**



 **Source:** Statistics Canada, immigrants admitted in 2017, five-year outcomes, 2024.

SETTLEMENT HAPPENS LOCALLY

Immigration programs operate federally or provincially, but daily **settlement takes place in a municipality.**



WHAT NEWCOMERS NEED TO CHOOSE AND STAY



EMPLOYMENT

Good jobs with career growth and stability.



HOUSING

Affordable, safe homes in strong, welcoming communities.



FAMILY OPPORTUNITY

Quality education, childcare and opportunities for all ages.



SERVICES

Reliable access to health care, transit and community supports.



SAFETY

Safe neighborhoods and a strong sense of personal security.



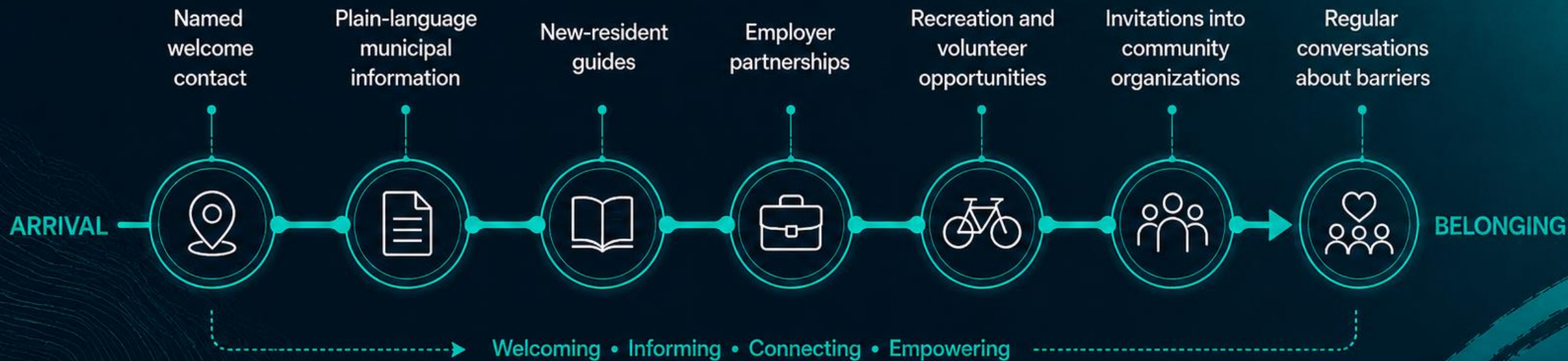
BELONGING

Connection, inclusion and a place to call home.



A recruited worker may still leave if their spouse **cannot connect**, their children feel **excluded**, housing is **unstable** or the family cannot see a **long-term future**.

WHAT MUNICIPALITIES CAN DO





Retirees



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR IS ALREADY CANADA'S OLDEST PROVINCE



MEDIAN AGE

47.8 vs. **40.6**

NEWFOUNDLAND
AND LABRADOR

NATIONALLY



AGED 65+

25.2% vs. **19.5%**

NEWFOUNDLAND
AND LABRADOR

NATIONALLY



65+ POPULATION GROWTH SINCE 2015

+44%

NEWFOUNDLAND
AND LABRADOR



One-quarter of the province is now **65 or older**,
and this group has **grown much faster** than the population overall.



Source: Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0005-01, July 1, 2025.

RETIREMENT IS A PLACE-BASED CHOICE

Retirees may choose where to live based on **family proximity, affordability, safety, services, recreation, faith, purpose** and **social connection**.



MOST OLDER CANADIANS WANT TO REMAIN IN THEIR HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

25.0%

Ages 65 to 79
used home adaptations



51.9%

Ages 80+
used home adaptations

Statistics Canada notes that most older Canadians prefer to stay in their **own homes and communities**.



Source: Statistics Canada, Aging in the community, 2025.

THE WEAKNESS IS NOT AGE. IT IS WHETHER THE TOWN **SUPPORTS AGING WELL.**

A resident may want to stay, but still leave because there is no **suitable housing, transportation, pharmacy access, social support** or **safe way to manage daily life.**



INDEPENDENCE

When the town supports aging well



Accessible
housing



Transportation
options



Pharmacy
access



Social
support



Safe daily
living

VS.



FORCED DEPARTURE

When the town lacks key supports



No suitable
housing



No reliable
transportation



No pharmacy
access



No social
support



Not safe to
manage daily life

Residents can remain, participate, and thrive.

Residents want to stay, but are left with no choice.



HOW TOWNS CAN ATTRACT AND RETAIN RETIREES



Housing



Smaller, accessible
homes



Downsizing
options



Access



Age-friendly
public spaces



Transportation
partnerships



Clear, centralized
service information



Regional health
care access



Purpose



Trails and
recreation



Volunteering
opportunities



Community
meals



Lifelong
learning

WHAT MAKES A TOWN CHOOSABLE?



A community cannot rely on **desirability** if it does not function.

It cannot rely on **functionality** if daily life is poor.

A good town needs all three.

WHAT MAKES A TOWN FUNCTIONAL?



RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Water, wastewater, roads, bridges, municipal buildings, drainage and snow clearing.



ASSET MANAGEMENT

Knowing what the municipality owns, its condition, when it must be replaced and how it will be funded.



CLEAR GOVERNMENT

Plain-language information, understandable permits, predictable processes and timely responses.



DIGITAL ACCESS

Reliable internet, cellular service, online information and accessible municipal services.



EMERGENCY READINESS

Plans for wildfire, flooding, storms, power outages, coastal hazards and evacuations.



REGIONAL COOPERATION

Sharing services, equipment, staff, expertise and planning where doing everything independently is unrealistic.

WHY DO
WE LIVE HERE?

HOW TOWNS BECOME MORE FUNCTIONAL



*People can accept that a town has limitations.
What destroys confidence is uncertainty, inconsistency and the feeling that no one has a plan.*

WHY DO
WE LIVE HERE?

WHAT MAKES A TOWN LIVABLE?



HOUSING

Homes that serve renters, young families, workers, seniors and people with accessibility needs.



FOOD

Grocery access, local food production, community gardens, markets and emergency food resilience.



HEALTH

Recreation, active living, social connection, clean environments and access to regional health services.



MOBILITY

Safe roads, walkable areas, accessible buildings and options for people who do not drive.



CONNECTION

Gathering spaces, clubs, volunteer opportunities, recreation and welcoming community organizations.



AFFORDABILITY

Municipal decisions that consider household costs, recreation fees, transportation and access to essential services.



WHY DO
WE LIVE HERE?

BELONGING IS A RURAL ADVANTAGE



46.2%

MOST URBAN

CATEGORY

VS.



74.1%

MOST RURAL

CATEGORY



Statistics Canada found that strong community belonging was substantially more common in the most rural category than in the most urban Newfoundland and Labrador category.



Small towns already possess something many places are **trying to create**.



The challenge is making **belonging** available to:



New residents



Young adults



Newcomers



People without family connections



Seasonal residents



People who feel outside established community networks

WHY DO
WE LIVE HERE?



WHAT MAKES A TOWN DESIRABLE?



IDENTITY

A clear sense of who the community is and what makes it different.



PUBLIC LIFE

Places and events where people naturally meet.



NATURE

Accessible trails, shorelines, parks and landscapes.



CULTURE

Arts, heritage, music, food and local traditions.



MOMENTUM

Visible improvements and confidence that the town has a future.



PARTICIPATION

Real opportunities for residents to help shape community life.

WHY DO
WE LIVE HERE?



HOW TOWNS BECOME MORE DESIRABLE



CARE FOR THE PLACE

Clean public areas, maintain entrances, improve signage, protect natural assets and complete visible projects.



ACTIVATE THE PLACE

Create recurring markets, walks, performances, community meals, outdoor programs and intergenerational activities.



TELL THE STORY

Show real homes, businesses, residents, recreation, nature and ordinary life. Explain who the town is a good fit for and what someone can actually experience there.

WHY DO
WE LIVE HERE?



If I could
live anywhere,
why would I
choose
your town?



WHY DO
WE LIVE HERE?