

Sector Profile

Arts, Entertainment and Recreation

Atlantic Region

2023



HIGHLIGHTS

- Arts, entertainment and recreation is a small sector of the Atlantic economy, accounting for 1.8% of employment. The sector is primarily focused on providing cultural, entertainment, and recreational services and is subject to seasonal fluctuations of activity and employment.
- The sector's workforce is well educated, with over two-thirds obtaining at least a post-secondary degree (69.5%), and youth comprising a growing share, with 35.2% between the ages of 15 and 24.
- The sector was one of the hardest hit during the COVID-19 pandemic but has nearly made a full recovery, gaining 4,300 workers in 2022 (+25.3%) and reaching an employment level that is only 4.5% lower than before the pandemic.
- The arts, entertainment and recreation sector is expected to be the fastest growing sector in the Atlantic economy, with an average rate of 1.9% per year over the 2023-2025 period.

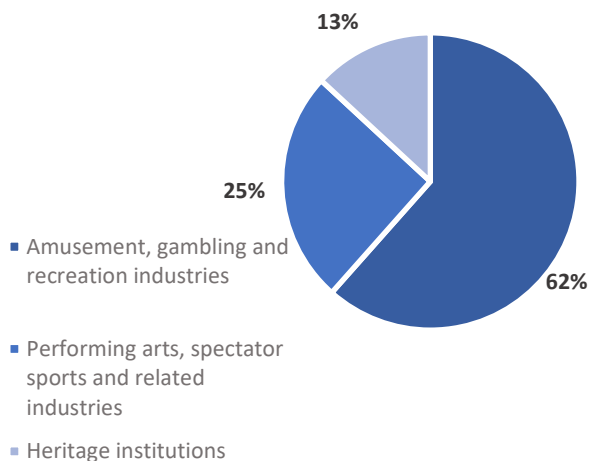
ABOUT THE INDUSTRY

Composition and Importance of the Sector

The arts, entertainment, and recreation sector is comprised of three broad sub-industries primarily focused on providing cultural, entertainment and recreational services. The largest sub-industry, amusement, gambling and recreation industries, accounted for almost two-thirds of sectoral employment during 2022. The sub-industry of performing arts, spectator sports, and related industries (25%) also represented a considerable portion of employment in this sector. In contrast, the Heritage institutions sub sector mostly involving museums and historic sites, remains the smallest and only amounted to 13% of sectoral employment. The largest employers in the sector are mostly involved in managing facilities for sports events and athletic activities, as well as operations involving gambling and large entertainment events.

Gross domestic product in the sector totaled \$453.6M in 2022, up by \$113.6M (+33.4%) year-over-year and contributing 0.4% of total economic output in Atlantic Canada.

Employment Share by sub-industry



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey 2022



Geographic Distribution of Employment

The arts, entertainment, and recreation sector employed 1.8% of Atlantic Canadian workers in 2022, with employment reaching 21,300. Compared to the year previous, this was a considerable increase of 4,300 workers (+25.3%) and almost a full recovery to 22,300 employed in 2019 before the pandemic.

Within the Atlantic Region, Nova Scotia accounts for the largest number of workers in arts, entertainment, and recreation, at 9,200, while sector comprises the large share of the overall workforce in Prince Edward Island (2.3%). Almost half of those working in this sector (47.9%) reside in either New Brunswick or Newfoundland and Labrador.

	Employed 2022	Industry Share (%)
Atlantic Canada	21,300	1.8%
Newfoundland and Labrador	4,100	1.8%
Prince Edward Island	1,900	2.3%
Nova Scotia	9,200	1.9%
New Brunswick	6,100	1.6%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

WORKFORCE

Workforce Characteristics

Just over one-third (33.7%) of businesses in this sector are independent artists performing freelance work within visual arts, writing, and acting. Additionally, some workers are employed seasonally in this sector as some businesses such as ski hills and golf courses can only operate during certain times of the year.

Educational attainment amongst workers in the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector saw strong improvement year-over-year in 2022. Those with at least a post-secondary education increased 8.3 percentage points to 69.5%, and almost a quarter (23.9%) of workers in the sector had a bachelors degree.

The workforce in this sector is getting younger, with those aged 15 to 24 now accounting for 35.2% of employment up from 27.6% compared to a year earlier. This was the largest age cohort in this sector in 2022 and a considerably larger share compared to the 13.5% observed for the Atlantic workforce as a whole. Moreover, those over the age of 55 employed in the sector fell significantly from 27.6% of sector employment in 2021 to 18.3% in 2022.

The sex composition of the sector remained almost evenly split in 2022, as 51.4% of employees were female and 48.6% were male, compared to 50.6% and 49.4%, respectively, a year earlier.

Main Occupations

Employment in this sector is distributed across a diverse range of occupations. The most common occupation in 2022 was program leaders and instructors in recreation, sport and fitness, which includes workers employed at gymnasiums, sporting arenas, and athletic facilities. This occupation accounted for about one fifth of total employment (19.6%). Another significant portion of the workforce (8.9%) were employed as operators and attendants in amusement, recreation and sport.

Notably, 37.9% of landscaping and grounds maintenance labourers in Atlantic Canada were employed in this sector in 2022.

Top 5 largest occupations	Employed 2022	% Share of Industry
Program leaders and instructors in recreation, sport and fitness	4,175	19.6%
Operators and attendants in amusement, recreation and sport	1,900	8.9%
Landscaping and grounds maintenance labourers	975	4.5%
Musicians and singers	625	2.9%
Painters, sculptors and other visual artists	600	2.8%

Source: ESDC/Service Canada



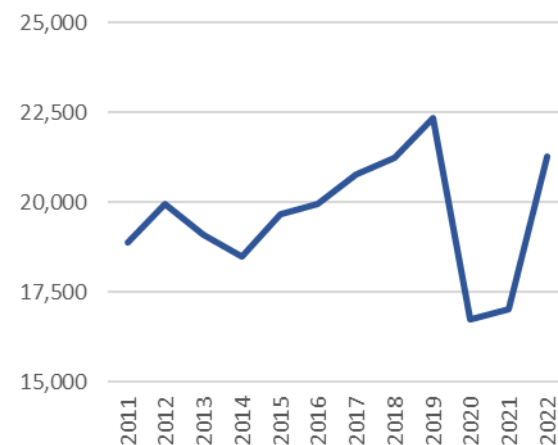
RECENT HISTORY

Employment in the arts, entertainment and recreation has fluctuated considerably in the past ten years. Between 2014 and 2019, employment rose steadily, with job growth averaging almost 800 per year. However, this sector was one of the hardest hit during the pandemic, as 5,600 jobs were lost in 2020, a decline of 25.1%. Much of this was the result of gathering limits at public gatherings such as sporting events, concerts and festivals, all of which are dependent on high attendance to be economically viable. As containment measures evolved in 2021, there was a small employment gain of 300 as some large public events resumed. As restrictions eased in early 2022, allowing the sector to respond to pent-up consumer demand, employment rose by 4,300— a record annual increase of 25.3%. This spike in job growth put the level of employment just 4.5% below pre-pandemic values in 2019.

In addition to the rapid recovery in 2022, this sector has experienced a major demographic shift. In 2022, an influx of youth (ages 15 to 24) entered the sector. Compared to 2021, there were 2,800 additional workers in this age cohort, accounting for 37.3% of employment growth in 2022 and more than one-third of total employment in the sector (35.2%). One out of every five workers over the age of 55 left the sector in 2022, a decline of 800.

Labour trends for this sector follow a seasonal pattern in which employment levels peak during the spring and summer months. These seasonal trends result in a slack labour market during the winter months, as the amount of available labour exceeds the number of positions. In Nova Scotia, for instance, there were 18.3 readily available workers per vacancy in Q1 2022, which declined to 3.6 the following quarter (Q2 2022) as weather conditions became more favourable. Similarly, New Brunswick had 10.2 job seekers available per position in Q1 2022, which declined to 4.3 in Q4 2022. Even as the number of vacancies peaked during Q2 2022 in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, at 305 and 530 positions, respectively, there was still a pool of labour available.

Historical Employment Trend
Atlantic Canada



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

Smaller sub-industries employing artisans have recovered significantly from pandemic containment measures, mirroring the sector as a whole, as demand for artisanal goods has increased. However, artisans are struggling to meet this demand due to supply chain disruptions affecting the availability of input materials. Furthermore, many artisans reside in rural areas, presenting challenges accessing cellular and internet services, which are vital for using tools such as social media to promote their businesses. Real estate prices have increased substantially in recent years, making it difficult to find studio space for tasks requiring tools and machines that cannot be used at home. On a more positive note, the renewal of holiday markets has restored an important seasonal opportunity to sell goods and gain international exposure, which can lead to exports in new markets.

Recreational programs for communities have been struggling to recruit and retain staff in recent years. Many vacancies are characterized by low wages, which can make it more challenging for employers to attract applicants. Staff for aquatic programs are especially difficult to recruit, as a specific skillset is required. Similarly, program supervisors, who are an integral part of program delivery, are also difficult to attract. Much of the labour within seasonal programs are volunteer-based, which adds further to recruitment challenges.



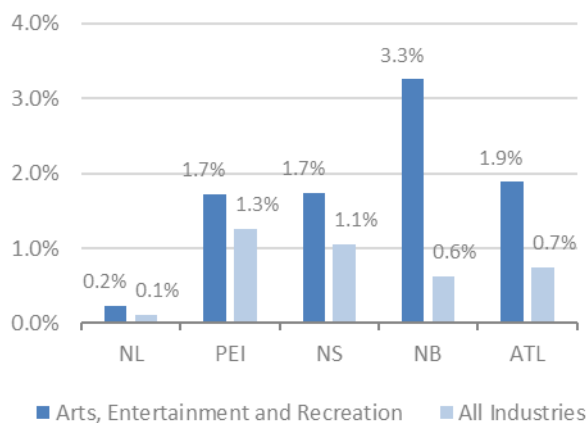
OUTLOOK

Employment in the Arts, entertainment and recreation sector is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 1.9% per year over the 2023-2025 period, more than doubling the overall rate for the Atlantic economy as a whole (+0.7%). This is the fastest growth rate by sector in the region. In 2023, Atlantic Canada had its first tourism season free of containment measures since 2019, allowing large gathering events to proceed with unlimited attendance, supporting the recovery of the sector.

Employment in this sector is projected to grow in all four Atlantic provinces between 2023 and 2025. Growth expectations can be attributed to the ongoing rebound from COVID-19 containment measures. The sector is projected to grow fastest in New Brunswick, at an average annual rate of 3.3%; it is also expected to lead sectoral growth within that province. This projected growth is attributed to the continued rebound effect as well as new opportunities within the film industry in the province. An average annual rate of 1.7% in this sector is anticipated in both Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Job growth is projected to be notably slower in Newfoundland and Labrador, at 0.2%. Employment has already recovered to pre-pandemic levels in the latter and is expected remain steady in the coming years.

While employment has rebounded substantially in Nova Scotia, adding 2,100 workers over the past year, it remains 1,200 below pre-pandemic levels. This suggests that there is the potential for more job recovery in this sector, particularly within the gambling sub-industry, which accounts for much of the shortfall.

Projected Average Annual Employment Growth Rate (%), Atlantic Provinces, 2023-2025



Source: ESDC/Service Canada

Prince Edward Island is expected to receive as many as 10,000 visitors for the Canada Winter Games in 2023, which is anticipated to generate over \$100M in economic activity for the province. Although many jobs will be temporary, this should drive additional employment growth in the sector.

Demand for goods and services provided by this sector are expected to remain high throughout the forecast period, though inflationary pressures could dampen additional growth of non-essential leisure activities in the region.

Note: In preparing this document, the authors have taken care to provide clients with labour market information that is timely and accurate at the time of publication. Since labour market conditions are dynamic, some of the information presented here may have changed since this document was published. Users are encouraged to also refer to other sources for additional information on the local economy and labour market. Information contained in this document does not necessarily reflect official policies of Employment and Social Development Canada.

The analysis in this report was finalized as of **September 2023**.

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APPENDIX

Real GDP (2022) and Employment (2022) for Atlantic Canada

	Arts, Entertainment and Recreation			All Industries		
	Number	Share of Total	AAGR*	Number	Share of Total	AAGR*
Real GDP (M\$)	\$453.6	100.0%	-1.3%	\$109,227.1	100.0%	1.0%
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$54.4	12.0%	-3.0%	\$30,150.3	27.6%	0.1%
Prince Edward Island	\$57.0	12.6%	0.4%	\$6,542.6	6.0%	2.5%
Nova Scotia	\$204.4	45.1%	0.4%	\$40,011.5	36.6%	1.5%
New Brunswick	\$137.8	30.4%	-3.2%	\$32,522.7	29.8%	1.1%
Employment (000s)	21.3	100.0%	0.6%	1175.2	100.0%	0.4%
Male	10.3	48.5%	-0.1%	596.0	50.7%	0.4%
Female	11.0	51.5%	1.4%	579.2	49.3%	0.5%
15-24 years old	7.5	35.1%	1.0%	158.7	13.5%	0.4%
25-54 years old	9.9	46.5%	0.8%	734.4	62.5%	-0.2%
55 years and older	3.9	18.4%	-0.3%	282.1	24.0%	2.2%
Worked full-time	13.2	61.8%	0.7%	990.6	84.3%	0.6%
Worked part-time	8.1	38.2%	0.6%	184.6	15.7%	-0.4%
Self-employed	4.3	20.4%	1.8%	123.2	10.5%	-1.0%
Employees	17.0	79.6%	0.4%	1052.0	89.5%	0.6%
Permanent job	9.0	42.1%	0.8%	884.4	75.3%	1.0%
Temporary job	8.0	37.7%	-0.1%	167.6	14.3%	-1.4%
Less than high school	3.1	14.7%	-2.0%	95.5	8.1%	-3.9%
High school graduate	6.0	28.0%	-0.8%	275.3	23.4%	-0.5%
Postsecondary cert. or diploma	5.3	25.0%	0.1%	456.3	38.8%	0.3%
University degree	6.9	32.4%	4.7%	348.2	29.6%	3.3%
Newfoundland and Labrador	4.1	19.4%	3.8%	232.5	19.8%	-0.3%
Prince Edward Island	1.9	8.9%	3.3%	84.3	7.2%	1.5%
Nova Scotia	9.2	43.2%	-0.8%	484.9	41.3%	0.6%
New Brunswick	6.0	28.4%	0.4%	373.5	31.8%	0.5%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey - Custom Table; Table 36-10-0402-01

*Average annual growth rate for last ten years of available data (GDP 2013-22 and Employment 2013-22)

