

CLIENT SEGMENT PROFILE

Seniors

Atlantic Canada



September 2014

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Acronyms

CSD	Canadian Survey on Disability
CSP	Client Segment Profiles
IALSS	International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey
NB	New Brunswick
NHS	National Household Survey
NL	Newfoundland and Labrador
NS	Nova Scotia
PEI	Prince Edward Island

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About the Client Segment Profiles

Each year, the Labour Market Analysis Directorate of Strategic Services, Atlantic Region produces Client Segment Profiles (CSP) for the Atlantic Region. The CSP provide provincial and local demographic and labour market information, trends and prospects for selected socio-demographic groups of the labour force, including youth, older workers, Aboriginal people, newcomers, persons with disabilities, seniors, and official language minority communities.

CSP are mainly intended to support regional Service Canada operations, especially with regard to the delivery of services and programs to specific client groups. However, they may also be of interest to those who seek to know more about the demographic and labour market trends for specific segments of the population. Facts and statistics presented in this document reflect information available as of July 2014.

Key Points

- Seniors' share of Atlantic Canada's overall population is increasing.
- The number of Aboriginal and immigrant seniors in Atlantic Canada is growing.
- Disability rates among seniors in Atlantic Canada are marginally higher than the rate nationally.
- The proportion of seniors in Atlantic Canada living in rural areas is significantly higher than the share nationally.
- The vast majority of seniors in Atlantic Canada are Anglophone.
- Atlantic Canada has a net inflow of seniors annually.
- Most seniors live in a "census family".¹
- Forty percent of seniors have no educational certification.
- Rural seniors have lower education levels than their urban counterparts.
- Education levels are highest for immigrant youth and lowest for Aboriginal seniors.
- Labour force participation rates of seniors are increasing.
- Unemployment rates for seniors are higher in Atlantic Canada than nationally.
- Seniors in Atlantic Canada derive a higher share of their income from government transfer payments than do seniors nationally.
- Female seniors have a higher incidence of low income than do male seniors.

¹ According to Statistics Canada (2012a), a census family "is composed of a married or common-law couple, with or without children, or of a lone parent living with at least one child in the same dwelling. Couples can be of the opposite sex or of the same sex".

- Atlantic Canada's workforce is aging faster than the national workforce.
- Atlantic Canada's aging workforce is not replacing itself with new workers entering the labour market.

Introduction

This profile provides an outline of the primary demographic and labour market characteristics of seniors in Atlantic Canada. The increase in life expectancy over the past several decades has generated ongoing debates about the definition of “senior.” In this document, seniors are defined as encompassing the section of the population aged 65 and over. In some instances, data are provided on individuals in the 55 to 64 age category to highlight selected characteristics of our upcoming group of seniors. The variables analysed in this document include demographic characteristics by age, mother tongue, living arrangements, education, labour market participation, and income for the senior population. Comparisons with the population aged 64 and under in the Atlantic Region and with the rest of Canada are also provided. As members of the baby boomer generation begin to turn 65 years old now and in the coming years, potentially the current definition of “senior” will be replaced by a new one.²

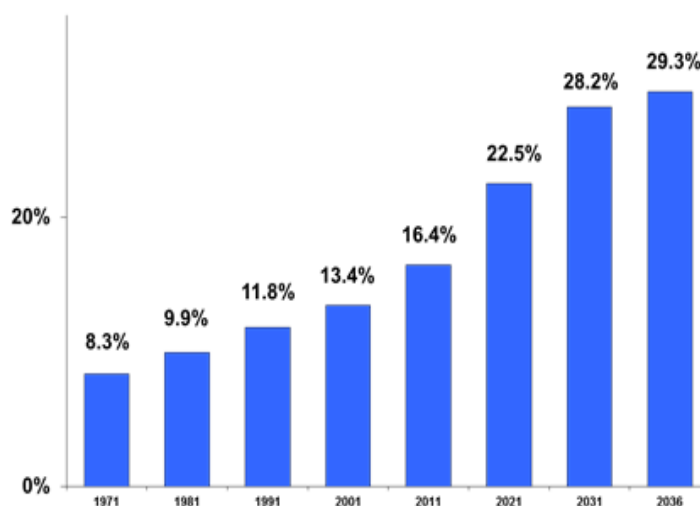
The data in this report are primarily from Statistics Canada’s Labour Force Survey, the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) and, for comparative purposes, the 2006 Census. In 2011, the NHS replaced the long form of the Census. It canvasses, on a voluntary basis, close to one-third of all households. Even though the survey goes to more households than the Census, completion of the survey was voluntary, which makes it difficult to compare Census and NHS data.

The information presented in this profile will be updated as more recent statistical information and research findings become available.

Section 1: Demographical Information

As of July 1, 2013, the population of Atlantic Canada was estimated at 2,368,778.³ Of this population, 415,000 or 17.5% were seniors. At 55%, females made up a slightly higher share of both the Atlantic Region’s and the nation’s senior population. Estimates suggest approximately 58% of seniors in the Region were in the 65 to 74 age bracket in 2013, 29% were in the 75 to 84 age category, and the remaining 12% were aged 85 and over. Nationally, seniors account for a slightly lower share of Canada’s overall population (15%). Atlantic Canada’s population structure is changing and is becoming progressively older. In 1971, the senior population stood at 171,600 and represented just over 8% of the Region’s total population. A continual increase in life expectancy over the last

Figure 1: Population 65 and over, Atlantic Canada Historical (1971 – 2011) and Projected (2021 – 2036)



Source: Statistics Canada: Census 2011, May 2012 Catalogue no. 98-311-XWE-2011002; Population Projections June 2010 Catalogue no. 91-520-X

² Statistics Canada, 2007.

³ Estimates are based on 2011 Census counts adjusted for the Census’ net under-coverage of the population and incompletely enumerated First Nations reserves, to which is added the estimated demographic growth from May 10, 2011, to June 30, 2013.

century, combined with declining fertility rates since the 1970s and the net out-migration of youth to other parts of Canada, are factors impacting upon demographic aging.

Population aging is expected to accelerate between 2010 and 2031, a period during which all baby boomers will reach age 65, and continue after 2031 but at a slower pace. By 2036, population projection estimates from Statistics Canada suggest approximately 30% of Atlantic Canadians will be aged 65 or over.⁴

According to Statistics Canada's population estimates, the share of seniors relative to provincial populations was fairly similar across the Atlantic Region in 2013. Each Atlantic province is projected to record increases in the number of seniors as a share of total population over the next two decades. Within the Region, NL is projected to have the highest share of seniors (31%) and PEI the lowest proportion (27.4%) relative to its overall population by 2036. Nationally, an estimated 24% of Canadians will be 65 or older in 2036.

Table 1: Estimated and Projected Share of Seniors as a Percentage of the Total Population, 2013-2031.

Year	Canada	NL	PEI	NS	NB
2013	15.3%	17.1%	17.3%	17.7%	17.6%
2016	16.3%	19.7%	18.9%	19.2%	19.4%
2021	18.5%	23.4%	21.4%	22.1%	22.6%
2026	20.8%	26.8%	24.0%	25.1%	25.7%
2031	22.8%	29.6%	26.4%	27.6%	28.4%
2036	23.7%	31.0%	27.4%	28.6%	29.4%

Source: Statistics Canada, Population estimates Table Number: 051-0001, Population Projections cited are based on the medium growth scenario (M1), Catalogue no. 91-520-X, 2010.

The current population make-up is characterized by a high number of people who were born between 1946 and 1965, the baby boomers. This generation was between 48 and 68 years of age in 2013 and accounted for approximately 30% of Atlantic Canadians. The first of the baby-boomer generation reached age 65 in 2010, and by 2036 baby boomers are expected to account for almost 70% of seniors in Atlantic Region. Baby boomers have made and will continue to make significant social, cultural, political, and economic impacts in their senior years.

If the projected demographic changes occur, this will have serious implications for public policies and budgets. Changes in the demographic profile will also have significant impacts on the labour and product markets, families, and individuals. A sizable share of seniors is likely to be socially and/or economically dependent on working-age Canadians.

As the senior population increases, the government will be faced with an increased challenge as to where to allocate resources. The number of seniors collecting Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, and Guaranteed Income Security will rise. In addition, federal funds will be needed to support health care, housing, and safety and security.

Composition of Seniors by Ethnicity, Immigrant Status, and Disability Rates

⁴ Statistics Canada, 2010.

- ***Aboriginal and immigrant seniors make up a much smaller share of Atlantic Canada's senior population than nationally, but this share is growing.***
- ***Approximately 35% of seniors in the Region are limited in their daily activities by a disability.***

According to the 2011 NHS, the number of Aboriginal seniors in the Region was recorded at 7,100. Aboriginal seniors accounted for 2% of the Region's overall senior population. Nationally, Aboriginal seniors make up a slightly smaller share of Canadian seniors (1.8%). Within the Region, Aboriginal seniors comprise approximately 8% of its Aboriginal population. Between 2001 and 2011, the number of Aboriginal seniors in the Region increased by 4,715 or by 200%. By comparison, Atlantic Canada's non-Aboriginal senior population rose by 25% during the same time period. In addition to an increase in life expectancy, there has been a significant increase in the number of individuals identifying as a member of an Aboriginal group over the 2001 to 2011 time period. At the national level, the number of seniors reporting Aboriginal identity doubled over the same period.

Regardless of age groups, visible minorities make up a much smaller share of Atlantic Canada's population as compared to their share nationally (3.3% versus 19%). In 2011, approximately 4,675 or 1% of seniors in the Region identified themselves as being a member of a visible minority group, as compared to 11% of seniors nationally. Visible minority seniors accounted for just over 6% of the Region's visible minority population. Black seniors are a subset of the visible minority population, and at 47%, they comprised the largest single visible minority group in the Region. Between 2001 and 2011, the number of visible minority seniors in the Region increased by 1,270 or 37%. Nationally, the population of visible minority seniors rose by 85% over the same period.

Of the 21,825 immigrant seniors residing in Atlantic Canada at the time of the 2011 NHS, approximately 430 or 2% had landed in Canada between 2006 and prior to May 10, 2011. The propensity to migrate to another country declines steadily with age. As such, it is not surprising that seniors would account for such a small share of recent immigrants to the area. The majority of new immigrants to Canada annually are in the 25 to 44 age category. While immigrant seniors make up just over 6% of the Region's senior population, they account for close to 24% of all immigrants in Atlantic Canada.

Initial findings associated with the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) indicate that 118,730 seniors aged 65 and over in Atlantic Canada reported being limited in their daily activities due to a disability.⁵ This represents approximately 35% of the senior population, two percentage points above the rate for seniors at the national level. By comparison, among Atlantic Canada's population aged 15 to 64, the prevalence of disability was recorded at 13%. Within the Atlantic Region, disability rates among seniors ranged from a low of 27% in NL to a high of almost 40% in NS. Disability rates for seniors in NB and in PEI were recorded at 35% and 37%, respectively.

There is a notable increase in disability rates by age subgroups. Thirteen percent of Atlantic Canadians aged 15 to 64 reported a disability in 2012 as compared to 35% of seniors. However, the share of seniors in the 65 to 74 age bracket with a disability was significantly lower than the rate for those aged 75 and over, 29% versus 45%. Nationally, a slightly smaller proportion of the senior population (32%) reported a disability. The most commonly reported types of disability for seniors were pain, flexibility,

⁵ The survey population comprised all Canadians aged 15 or older as of May 10, 2011 who were living in private dwellings. The institutionalized population is excluded.

and mobility.⁶ The CSD incorporates significant changes from previous surveys on disabilities, i.e. the Participation and Activity Limitation Surveys (PALS) 2006 and 2001, and the way in which disability is defined. As a result, comparisons cannot be made between PALS and CSD data.⁷

Area of Residence

- ***Atlantic Canada has a higher share of rural seniors than nationally.***
- ***The share of seniors is increasing faster in urban areas in Atlantic Canada.***

For the purpose of this report, a rural area is defined as living outside of either a Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) or a Census Agglomeration (CA) which, combined, constitute urban areas.¹ Regardless of age groups, Atlantic Canada's population is significantly more rural than the rest of Canada. According to the 2011 Census, approximately 170,570, or 45%, of seniors in Atlantic Canada were living in rural areas. By comparison, fewer than 21% of seniors nationally were rural residents. The size of the rural population varies greatly from one province to another within Atlantic Canada. The share of rural seniors was highest in NL at 58% and lowest in NS at 41%. In both NB and PEI, approximately 45% of seniors were rural dwellers.

A major challenge facing rural areas is retaining its population and attracting new people. Using Census data, between 2006 and 2011 the Region's rural senior population increased by almost 9%, compared to a 17% increase in the urban senior population.

Table 2: Area of Residence of Seniors, Atlantic Canada, 2011.

Senior Population	Atlantic	NL	PEI	NS	NB					
Senior Population	381,900	82,105	22,785	153,375	123,635					
Urban	211,330	55%	34,090	42%	12,605	55%	89,905	59%	74,730	60%
Rural	170,570	45%	48,015	58%	10,080	45%	63,470	41%	48,905	40%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2011 Table Number: 98-311-X2011025.

Regardless of age, Aboriginal people are more likely to be rural dwellers as compared to non-Aboriginal people. In 2011, the number of Aboriginal people living in the rural areas of Atlantic Canada was estimated at 52,170 which accounts for 55% of the Atlantic Region's Aboriginal population. By comparison, 40% of the Region's non-Aboriginal population lived in rural parts of the Region. Among Aboriginal seniors, the proportion of those residing in rural areas was 63% or 17 percentage points higher than their non-Aboriginal counterparts in 2011.

The proportion of Aboriginal seniors living on reserves has declined from approximately 20% in 2006 Census to close to 13% in 2011. Nationally, the share of Aboriginal seniors on reserves also declined during the same period from 27% in 2006 to 21% in 2011. Two factors which may be contributing to the decline in the number of Aboriginal people recorded living on reserves are the change in the definition of reserves in the NHS compared to Census 2006 and the increasing trend in the number of Aboriginal people living off reserves.⁸ Within the Region, NB had the highest share of Aboriginal seniors residing

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Statistics Canada, 2013a.

⁸ Statistics Canada, 2013b.

on reserves (27%), while in NS approximately 15% of Aboriginal seniors lived on reserves. The sample sizes for PEI and NL were too small to be reported.

Immigrants are more likely to choose to live in urban areas where family and friends are present and where people of the same ethnicity may be able to provide economic, social, and cultural support.⁹ Close to 73% of immigrants in Atlantic Canada are urban dwellers compared with 59% of non-immigrants. When the senior population is considered separately, a higher proportion of immigrant seniors are concentrated in urban areas of the Region. In 2011, the majority of immigrant seniors (66%) in Atlantic Canada were urban dwellers. By comparison, just over half of their non-immigrant counterparts (53%) lived in urban areas of the Region. Among the population of new immigrants who had landed between 2006 and May 10, 2011, the proportion of those choosing to reside in urban areas rises to 84%. For new immigrant seniors, the sample size in Atlantic Canada is too small to be able to report on urban versus rural status.

Languages

- ***The vast majority of seniors in the Atlantic Region are Anglophone.***
- ***3% of seniors in the Atlantic Region are Francophone.***
- ***12% of seniors in the Atlantic Region have knowledge of both official languages.¹⁰***

Mother tongue refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual at the time of the 2011 NHS. In Atlantic Canada, the majority of seniors are Anglophone, and 299,950 (or 84%) reported English as their mother tongue. Those with French as their mother tongue (Francophone) numbered 12,260 or just over 3% of the Atlantic Region's seniors' population. Close to 12% of seniors in Atlantic Canada reported both official languages as their mother tongue. Nationally, Anglophone seniors made up a smaller share of Canada's senior population (66%), while the proportion of Francophone seniors was considerably larger at 15%. Given the diversity of seniors nationally, the proportion who reported a non-official language as mother tongue was approximately 5% as compared to 0.1% in Atlantic Canada.

In 2011, the vast majority (84%) of seniors in the Atlantic Region reported that they were able to conduct conversation in English only, 3% could speak French only, and 12% reported they could converse in both official languages. Within the Region, the proportion of seniors who could converse in both official languages ranged from a low of less than 2% in NL to a high of 26% in NB. In PEI and NS, the respective shares of seniors with knowledge of both English and French were 8% and 7%.

For the next generation of seniors, those aged 55 to 64, in Atlantic Canada in 2011, 14% reported having knowledge of both official languages which is marginally higher than the proportion of current seniors (14% versus 12%). Within the Region, there were no significant differences between the proportion of those in the 55 to 64 age category and seniors with knowledge of both official languages except for the province of NB. In NB the share of individuals who could converse in both official languages was 33% for the next generation of seniors as compared with 27% of current seniors.

Migration

⁹ Statistics Canada, 2005.

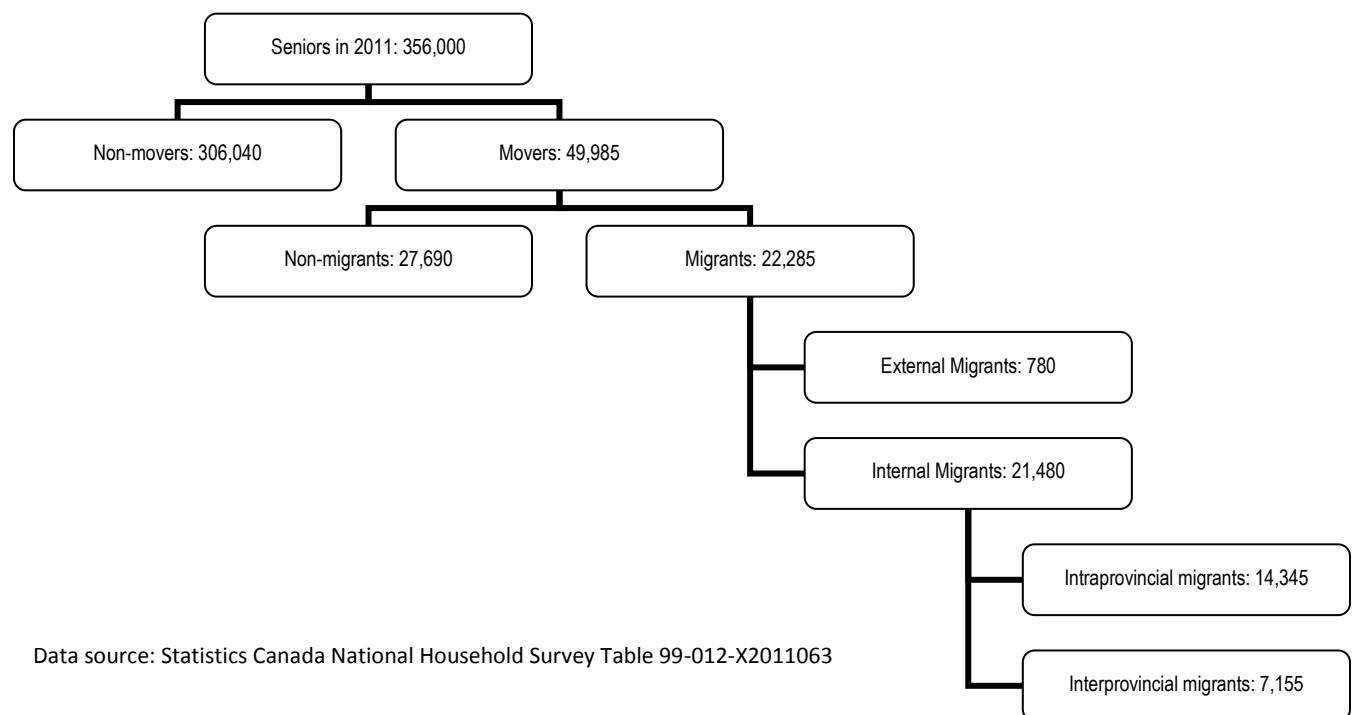
¹⁰ Refers to the ability to conduct a conversation in English, French, in both English and French, or in neither English nor French.

– Seniors are the least likely group to move.

Mobility status refers to the place of residence on Census day, May 10, 2011, in relation to the place of residence on the same day five years earlier, May 10, 2006.¹¹ Non-movers are individuals who did not change residences while movers can be subdivided into two categories: non-migrants and migrants. There are several factors which influence seniors' decisions to change place of residence. Some change addresses to downsize upon becoming empty nesters or to simplify their life style, while others move to be closer to amenities or family.

Of the 356,000 seniors in Atlantic Canada on May 10, 2011 the vast majority (86%) were non-movers. Of the population of movers (49,985 or 14% of seniors), just over half (55%) moved to a different address within the same census division (i.e. remained in the same city, town, township, village, or Indian reserve) and are classified as "non-migrants." The remaining population of migrants had moved to a different census division within the same province (known as intraprovincial migrants), lived in another province (interprovincial migrants), or lived outside of Canada (external migrants) on May 10, 2006. Intraprovincial migrants accounted for approximately 30% of all movers and for the largest share of migrants (64%). The likelihood of being either an interprovincial or external migrant diminished significantly with age.

Figure 2: Mobility Status of Seniors in Atlantic Canada, 2011



Within the Atlantic Region, seniors in NL were the least likely group to change residence whereas those in PEI were the most likely to move to a new address (12% versus 17%). Close to 15% of seniors in NS and NB changed addresses during the five-year time period. While there was little difference between the shares of movers by gender, senior females were more likely to move relative to senior males (15% compared to 13%).

¹¹ Statistics Canada, 2011.

While the propensity to move was slightly higher among the upcoming group of seniors, those aged 55 to 64 in 2011, the majority (82%) were living in the same place of residence on May 10, 2011 as five years earlier. Among movers, the proportion of migrants was marginally higher for individuals aged 55 to 64 as compared to their senior counterparts (49% versus 46%). By comparison, core-aged workers (25-54 years of age), were the more likely to move than individuals in the 55 to 64 age category or those aged 65 and above. According to the 2011 NHS, almost 40% of core-aged workers in Atlantic Canadian moved residence between 2006 and 2011.

Interprovincial migration is the movement from one province or territory to another involving a permanent change in residence. Atlantic Canada has a long history of net interprovincial out-migration. Over the past decade, July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2013, the Region's population declined by an estimated 67,000 as a result of net interprovincial outflows. However when the senior population is considered separately, Atlantic Canada is a net importer of people aged 65 and above. Close to 19,000 seniors moved to the Region during this 10-year period while approximately 17,000 left for other parts of Canada which resulted in a net inflow of 1,990 seniors. Of this total net inflow, just under 40% moved to NS, 26% to NB, and 23% to NL.

Families

- ***The majority of seniors live in "census families".***
- ***Female seniors are twice as likely to live alone.***

According to the 2011 NHS, the majority (71%) of seniors in private households in the Atlantic Region were part of a census family, with the remaining 29% either living with relatives or living alone. Among the population aged 65 and over in Atlantic Canada, the majority (62%) lived as part of a couple (married spouses or common-law partners) in 2011, the same proportion as the national share. The prevalence of living as a couple declines with age in Atlantic Canada. Among the Region's senior population aged 65 to 69, 74% lived as part of a couple in 2011. For seniors aged 85 and over, fewer lived with a married spouse or common-law partner (47%).

In 2011, just over one-in-four seniors in Atlantic Canada lived alone. Both nationally and in the Region, living alone was more common for men than for women at younger ages. By comparison, senior women were more than twice as likely as men to live alone, 35% compared to 16%. This can, in part, be explained by the fact that women have a higher life expectancy than men and the tendency for women to have had a spouse or partner who is slightly older. As such, the likelihood of being widowed, and living alone, is greater for senior women as compared to senior men.¹²

Across the Atlantic Region there were only minor variations in the proportion of seniors living with a spouse or common-law partner. However, the share of seniors living alone in NS was much larger than the proportion of seniors in NL who lived by themselves. There was a five percentage point gap between the percentages of seniors living alone in NS as compared to their counterparts in NL (28% versus 23%). At 27%, there was no difference between percentage of seniors living alone in NB or in PEI.

In terms of urban versus rural dwellers, there was little difference between the shares of seniors in rural areas of the Region who were living as part of a couple in 2011 as compared to urban seniors (63%

¹² Statistics Canada, 2012b.

versus 61%). Similarly, the share of urban seniors living alone (27%) was comparable to that of seniors in rural areas (25%) within Atlantic Canada.

Education

- **Four-in-ten seniors did not complete high school.**
- **Aboriginal seniors have the lowest and immigrant seniors have the highest levels of educational attainment among seniors in the Atlantic Region.**

An individual's educational attainment level is often associated with particular behaviours and socioeconomic conditions. Individuals with more education tend to have better health, are less likely to have a low income, and are less likely to be socially isolated.¹³

Today's seniors have higher levels of educational attainment than previous generations. Education levels have increased considerably over the past decade and are expected to continue to increase in the coming years. However, the Atlantic Region has a higher percentage of seniors with less than high school completion and fewer with university degrees than seniors nationally. Between 2003 and 2013, the share of Atlantic Canadians aged 65 and older with less than high school completion declined from 58% to 41%. Nationally, the proportion of seniors who had not completed high school decreased from 50% to 35% during the same period. Over the 10-year period, the percentage of university graduates aged 65 and over in the Region doubled to reach 12%. At the national level, the share of seniors with university credentials rose from 9% to approximately 16%.

Regardless of improvements in the levels of educational attainment, a significant gap remains between seniors and their counterparts in the 55 to 64 and 25 to 54 age categories. In 2013, the share of seniors in Atlantic Canada with less than high school completion was almost twice that of the upcoming group of seniors (41% versus 22%) and four times higher than individuals in the 25 to 54 age group.

Table 3: Educational Attainment in Atlantic Canada, 2013.

Highest educational attainment	Seniors Age 65 and over		Individuals Age 55 - 64		Individuals Age 25 - 54	
Total Population	395,400		352,200		921,000	
0 – 8 years	79,000	20.0%	27,600	7.8%	23,600	2.6%
Some high school	83,200	21.0%	48,900	13.9%	75,300	8.2%
High school graduate	57,000	14.4%	67,600	19.2%	175,100	19.0%
Some postsecondary	13,600	3.4%	14,800	4.2%	46,200	5.0%
Postsecondary certificate or diploma	115,100	29.1%	133,300	37.8%	373,600	40.6%
University	47,400	12.0%	59,900	17.0%	227,000	24.6%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Table Number: 282-0004.

In 2013, a marginally higher percentage of female seniors had less than high school completion compared to senior males (42% versus 40%). Within the Atlantic Region, NS had the lowest share of seniors with less than high school completion whereas NL had the highest (36% versus 47%). At 40%, PEI had the second lowest share of seniors who had not completed high school followed by NB at 43%.

¹³ Statistics Canada, 2007.

The higher educational attainment is also evident among Atlantic Canadians aged 55 to 64, the upcoming group of seniors. The share of males in this age group with less than a high school education declined from 35% in 2003 to 23% in 2013, while the share with a university degree rose from 14% to 17%. Even more pronounced is the decline in the share of females in this age group with less than high school completion from 36% to 20%, coupled with the rise in the share with a university degree, from 11% to 17%.

Educational attainment levels are higher among younger seniors than older seniors. According to the 2011 NHS, 36% of seniors aged 65 to 74 in the Region had no certificate, diploma or degree as compared to 50% seniors aged 75 and over. Close to 15% of younger seniors had university credentials at, or above, the bachelor level compared to 10% of older seniors.

The levels of educational attainment also vary considerably in terms of urban versus rural dwellers. Seniors living in urban parts of the Atlantic Region are more likely to have completed high school and higher levels of education than seniors in rural areas. Data from the 2011 NHS indicate that 35% of seniors in urban areas of Atlantic Canada had no certification, diploma or degree, compared to approximately 50% of those living in rural areas of the Region. At the other end of the educational scale, almost 16% of urban seniors in the Region had university credentials at, or above, the bachelor level. By comparison, close to 10% of their rural counterparts had this level of educational attainment, a gap of six percentage points. Regardless of area of residence, within the Region PEI had the lowest proportion of seniors with no certification and the highest share with university credentials.

Table 4: Educational Attainment of Seniors, by Province and Urban/Rural Status, 2011.

Educational attainment	NL		PEI		NS		NB	
	No Cert.	University ¹⁴	No Cert.	University	No Cert.	University	No Cert.	University
Senior Population	50.1%	10.1%	35.2%	14.5%	37.3%	15.3%	44.1%	12.2%
Urban	36.0%	16.1%	29.2%	18.0%	33.6%	17.4%	37.2%	14.7%
Rural	60.0%	6.0%	42.3%	10.3%	42.4%	8.8%	53.3%	8.8%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 NHS Table Number: 99-012-X2011039.

Both in Atlantic Canada and nationally, levels of educational attainment are lowest for on-reserve Aboriginal seniors and highest for immigrant seniors. The levels of educational attainment of Aboriginal seniors lag behind those of the non-Aboriginal senior population in Atlantic Canada. According to the 2011 NHS, approximately 55% of Atlantic Canada's Aboriginal people aged 65 and over had no certificate, diploma or degree, while the proportion of the non-Aboriginal people in the same age group was 42%, a gap of 13 percentage points. Nationally, the gap between Aboriginal people with no certificate, diploma or degree and their non-Aboriginal counterparts was more pronounced. Close to 54% of the Aboriginal population nationally had this level of educational attainment as compared to 35% of Canada's non-Aboriginal population.

Although the gap in the level of educational attainment narrows for those with postsecondary education, the share of the population who are university graduates at the bachelor level or above is

¹⁴ Refers to a university certificate, diploma or degree at, or above, the bachelor level.

higher for the Region's non-Aboriginal seniors (13% versus 6%). Nationally, the gap in educational attainment between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal seniors at the university level was significant. The percentage reaching this level of attainment was 18% or 10 percentage points higher than that of the Aboriginal population.

When the on-reserve population is considered separately, there is a notable increase in the proportion of seniors without any formal educational certification. The proportion of the on-reserve Aboriginal seniors in Atlantic Canada with no certification, diploma or degree is higher at 60% than their off-reserve counterparts (55%). Nationally, the gap in educational attainment between the on- and off-reserve Aboriginal populations is significant. In 2011, close to 71% of Aboriginal seniors on reserves had no certification, diploma or degree as compared to 50% of the off-reserve population.

Regardless of age, immigrants have higher levels of educational attainment than their non-immigrant counterparts. In 2011, close to 17% of immigrant seniors in Atlantic Canada had no formal certification, as compared to just over 44% of the Region's non-immigrant seniors. At the other end of the educational attainment continuum, almost 35% of immigrant seniors had university certification at or above the bachelor level, which is 23 percentage points higher than the proportion of non-immigrant seniors with this level of certification.

Both nationally and in the Atlantic Region, Anglophone seniors have higher levels of educational attainment than Francophone seniors. In 2011, close to 57% of Francophone seniors in the Region had no certificate, diploma or degree as compared to 40% of their Anglophone counterparts. Nationally, the gap in educational attainment by mother tongue is less acute. In 2011, approximately 42% of Francophone seniors and 30% of Anglophone seniors had no certificate, diploma or degree.

Table 5: Educational Attainment by Client Segment Populations, Seniors, Atlantic Canada, 2011.¹⁵

Highest Level of Educational Attainment Among Seniors	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Immigrant	Non-Immigrant	Anglo-phone	Franco-phone
Population	7,100	348,910	21,820	333,830	300,040	46,775
No certificate, diploma or degree	55.5%	41.8%	17.2%	43.7%	40.2%	56.7%
High school certificate or equivalent	13.7%	19.8%	21.3%	19.5%	21.0%	11.4%
Postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree	30.6%	38.4%	61.5%	36.7%	38.8%	31.9%
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	14.4%	11.9%	10.7%	12.0%	11.9%	11.9%
College, CEGEP or other non-university cert./diploma	9.4%	13.3%	16.0%	13.0%	13.9%	9.0%
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	1.8%	3.6%	5.6%	3.4%	3.6%	3.4%
University cert., diploma or degree at bachelor or above	4.4%	9.6%	29.1%	8.3%	9.4%	7.6%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 NHS Table Numbers: 99-012-X2011039, 99-012-X2011042 & 99-012-X20110598.

Literacy

¹⁵ Future releases from the 2011 NHS may provide similar data for persons with disabilities.

- ***The majority of seniors do not have the desired literacy levels to function well in a knowledge-based economy.***

Literacy proficiency is probably more important to providing services than education levels. Prose literacy proficiency measures the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts including editorials, news stories, brochures, and instruction manuals. Seniors are better able to make informed decisions regarding their health care, housing, and financial affairs if their level of literacy proficiency enables them to seek, understand, and apply information.

The 2003 International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS) uses a 5-Level literacy proficiency scale, Level 1 being the lowest and Level 5 the highest¹⁶. Since a relatively small proportion of respondents are at Level 5, published results combine Levels 4 and 5. To be able to function well in Canadian society, Level 3 proficiency is considered to be the 'desired level'. The IALSS measures knowledge and skills along a broad range of abilities; as such, the results cannot be used to classify population groups as either "literate" or "illiterate". Except for those over the age of 65 years, the largest proportion of individuals is at Level 3 on the prose literacy scale. Age and literacy performance are related; studies show literacy proficiency tends to decrease with age. In addition, given the general relationship between proficiency and educational attainment, differences in proficiency levels between seniors and individuals in the 16 to 65 age category may, in part, be related to relative differences in their educational attainment.

Within the Atlantic Provinces, NB had the highest percentage of seniors below Level 3 prose proficiency (89%) while NS had the lowest (81%). In general, the proportion of seniors with scores below Level 3 is lowest in Western Canada.

The largest proportion of seniors below Level 3 is found at Level 1. Individuals who score at this level have very limited abilities to locate, understand, and use information which may constrain their participation in society. Within the Region, NL had the highest proportion of seniors at Level 1 in prose literacy in the Region. The proportion of seniors with Level 1 is lowest in NS.

Table 6: Prose Proficiency Level of Seniors aged 66 and over, 2003.

Proficiency Levels	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4/5
Canada	51.5%	30.6%	15.2%	2.2%
NL	59.4%	25.7%	13.2%E*	1.7%E
PEI	53.8%	33.9%	10.8%E	1.6%E
NS	48.2%	32.8%	17.3%	1.7%E
NB	58.7%	30.4%	10.2%	0.7%E
E: Data should be used with caution				

Source: Statistics Canada, Building on our Competencies: Canadian Results of the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, 2003 Catalogue no. 89-617-XIE.

¹⁶ The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies 2011/2012 replaced the IALSS, but only collected data on adults aged 16 to 65.

Results from the IALSS suggest that 82% of Canadian seniors (aged 66 and over) do not have the prose literacy skills (Level 3) needed to succeed in a knowledge-based economy and society. As such, only 18% of Canadian seniors can integrate multiple pieces of information from one or more documents and use tables and graphs. Nationally, just over half of seniors performed at Level 1 proficiency. In 2003, 58% of the upcoming group of Canadian seniors, aged 56 to 65, had below Level 3 prose literacy proficiency.

Nationally, the proportion of the Francophone population aged 16 and over scoring below Level 3 was higher than the proportion of Anglophones. On the prose literacy scale, 55% of Francophones scored below Level 3 as compared to 39% of Anglophones. In NB, 66% of the Francophone population aged 16 and over were below Level 3 compared to almost half of Anglophones in the province. Data for the senior population by mother tongue is not available; therefore, it is possible Francophone seniors may also have lower literacy proficiency skills than their Anglophone counterparts.

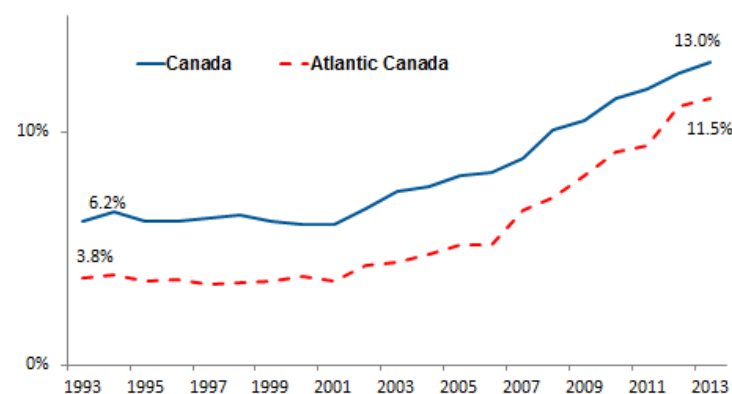
Section 2: Labour Market Analysis

Labour Force Participation

- ***The labour force participation rates of seniors have more than doubled over the last 20 years.***
- ***There is a sizeable difference in labour force participation rates of seniors by gender.***
- ***Labour force participation rates of seniors are lower in rural areas.***
- ***Four-in-ten employed seniors work part time.***

Today's seniors have a stronger attachment to the labour force than seniors in previous decades. Some seniors may continue to work for enjoyment and social interaction, while others work because of financial need. Although labour force participation rates of seniors are low, they have been increasing steadily over the past 20 years.¹⁷ In 1993, less than 4% of seniors in the Atlantic Canada were in the labour market. By 2013, approximately 11.5% were labour force participants. At the national level, the participation rates of seniors are marginally higher than the rates for seniors in Atlantic Canada. Across the Region, the participation rates of seniors in 2013 ranged from a low of 9.6% in NL to a high of 17.6% in PEI. Participation rates for seniors in NS and NB were 12% and 10.9%, respectively.

Figure 3: Labour Force Participation Rates for Seniors, Canada and Atlantic Canada 2013



Source: Statistics Canada, Cansim, Table Number: 280-0002

¹⁷ The labour force refers to the civilian, non-institutional population 15 years of age and over who, during the Labour Force Survey reference week, were employed or unemployed. The labour force participation rate is the percentage of working age people (15 years of age and over) in the population who are part of the labour force. This is calculated by taking the size of the labour force, and dividing it by the population (15+).

For the youngest cohort of seniors, those aged 65 to 69, their participation rates increased from a little over 7% in 1993 to approximately 22% by 2013. The oldest group of seniors, aged 70 and above, also experienced rising participation rates over the 20-year period (2.1% versus 5.8%).

Participation rates have also increased for the upcoming group of seniors (aged 55 to 64) in the Region. Close to 61.7% of this population were in the labour market in 2013, up from 38.4% twenty years earlier.

As with the general population, senior males are more likely to be in the labour force than senior females. However, the gap in participation rates by gender is smaller for the population 64 years and under. In 2013, the participation rate of senior males was over twice that of their female counterparts (15.8% versus 7.8%). This outcome is not unique to the Atlantic Region; nationally, a similar sized gap in the participation rates of seniors exist by gender. For the youngest cohort of seniors, the difference between the participation rate of males and females narrows to 11 percentage points (27.5% versus 16.2%).

Regardless of age groups, labour force participation rates vary by level of educational attainment. The higher the level of educational attainment, the more likely the individual will be in the labour force. In 2013, seniors in the Region with a university degree were close to three times more likely to be in the labour force as compared to seniors who did not complete high school, 21% versus 6.6%.

Province of residence influences the labour market attachment of seniors in Atlantic Canada. In 2013, their participation rates ranged from a high of almost 17.6% in PEI to a low of 9.7% in NL. NS and NB recorded participation rates of 12% and 10.9%, respectively.

Place of residence, in terms of urban or rural area, is a factor in determining labour market engagement and outcomes. In general, labour force participation rates in urban parts of the Atlantic Region are significantly higher than in rural areas. However, among seniors the gap in participation rates is small. According to the 2011 NHS, 10% of rural seniors were labour force participants, as compared to 11.5% of their urban counterparts. As was the case at the provincial level, participation rates were highest for rural dwellers in PEI and lowest for rural seniors in NL (16% versus 6.5%).

According to the 2011 NHS, there are no noteworthy differences in participation rates of seniors within the Region between Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, and the total senior population. However, there was more than a five percentage point difference between the participation rates of senior immigrants and other groups of seniors (16.3% versus 10.8%). When mother tongue is considered, a marginally higher share of Anglophone seniors were labour force participants relative to Francophone seniors (11% versus 9%). At the national level, the gap in participation rates by mother tongue is more pronounced. An estimated 16% of Anglophone seniors were in the labour force in 2011 as compared to 10.5% of Francophone seniors.

Seniors have significantly higher rates of part-time employment as compared to the younger segment of the labour force.¹⁸ In Atlantic Canada, there were 16,500 seniors working part time in 2013, or 40% of all seniors who were working, as compared to 42% at the national level. By comparison, approximately 17% of workers aged 55 to 64 and 11% of those aged 25 to 54 worked part-time jobs in 2013. The vast majority of part-time senior workers in Atlantic Canada (81%) cited 'personal preferences' as their main

¹⁸ Part-time employment consists of persons who usually work less than 30 hours per week at their main or only job.

reason for working part time, which was marginally below the share nationally (84%). Among the upcoming group of seniors in the Region, close to 60% cite personal preference as the main reason for working on a part-time basis.

As is the situation with workers aged 64 and under, a higher proportion of senior females work part time as compared to senior males. In 2013, approximately 55% of senior females in Atlantic Canada and nationally worked part time, 23 percentage points higher than senior males.

The prevalence of self-employment is higher among working seniors as compared to workers in the 25 to 64 age group. Results from the 2011 NHS indicate that over one-in-four working seniors in Atlantic Canada are self-employed. For workers aged 25 to 64, less than 9% are self-employed. Nationally, the share of workers who are self-employed is higher than the Atlantic levels for both seniors and workers aged 25 to 64, at 33% and 12%, respectively.

Both nationally and in the Region, self-employment is more common among senior males. A 13 percentage point gap exists between the proportion of senior males who are self-employed (30.5%) and their female counterparts (17.5) in Atlantic Canada. Nationally, a similar sized gender-gap exists for senior.

Occupational Grouping

– Sales and Services is the main occupational group for seniors.

The majority of seniors worked in three of the ten broad occupational groups.¹⁹ The three most common occupational groups for seniors in the Region are: sales and services (21.6%); business, finance and administration occupations (15.7%); and management (15.2%). These occupations accounted for close to 52% of jobs for seniors, according to the 2011 NHS. For the upcoming group of seniors, sales and services, & trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations, followed by business, finance and administration occupations, accounted for the top broad three occupational groups.

As is the situation for all workers, there are noteworthy gender differences in occupational groupings. Female seniors have business, finance and administrative occupations as their top general occupational group, whereas trades, transport and equipment operators ranked in first place for senior males. The second largest occupational grouping for both genders was sales and service occupations. However, the share of females (25%) was five percentage points higher than that for males in sales and services occupations. For females, the third largest occupational group was education, law and social, community and government services, where approximately 20% were employed. In comparison, management occupations accounted for 18.5% of male employment, their third largest occupational group.

Unemployment Rates

¹⁹ Occupation was classified with the National Occupational Classification 2011. It consists of 10 broad occupational categories which are subdivided into 40 major groups. 'Occupation groups' in this document refer to the 1-digit broad occupational categories.

– Unemployment rates for seniors are higher in Atlantic Canada than nationally.

Reflecting a more difficult labour market in Atlantic Canada, the annual average unemployment rate for seniors in the Atlantic Region was 9.5% compared to 4.3% nationally in 2013.²⁰ The unemployment rate recorded for seniors in the Region was marginally below the rate for the upcoming group of seniors (10%), those aged 55 to 64, and one percentage point higher than the unemployment rate for workers in the 25 to 54 age category. Within the Region, unemployment rates for seniors ranged between 6.7% and 14.3% with NS reporting the lowest rate and PEI the highest. For NB and NL, the unemployment rates were 10.1% and 12.3%, respectively. Due to sample size limitations, it is not possible to determine reliable unemployment data for seniors in Atlantic Canada by gender, mother tongue, ethnicity, immigrant status, or urban/rural status.

Income

- **Seniors in Atlantic Canada derive a higher share of their income from government transfer payments than do seniors nationally.**
- **The share of women receiving CPP benefits has increased significantly.**
- **Median private retirement income for women is close to half the amount received by men.**

Having sufficient income is fundamental to the independence of seniors. Income can be classified into two broad categories: income from private sources and income from government sources.²¹ For seniors in the Atlantic Region, approximately one half of total income was derived from government transfer payments in 2010. While government transfer payments were the principal component of the total income of both seniors in Atlantic Canadian and nationally, they contributed to a higher share of the total income of seniors in the Region relative to seniors nationally (41%).

In 2010, the median total income of seniors ranged from \$18,780 in NL to \$21,822 in NS.²² The median income from all sources was lower in the Region than for seniors at the national level (\$23,518).

Table 7: Composition of Income: Seniors, Atlantic Canada, 2010.

Senior population	Canada	NL	PEI	NS	NB
Median income from all sources	\$23,518	\$18,780	\$20,956	\$21,822	\$20,092
Median Retirement income ²³	\$11,688	\$11,066	\$10,860	\$12,768	\$10,944
Median Government transfers ²⁴	\$14,525	\$15,125	\$14,238	\$14,294	\$14,259

²⁰ The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the labour force.

²¹ Income from private sources, or market income, includes employment income, investment income and private retirement income, etc. Income from government sources refers to any form of government transfer payments.

²² Median income is the amount which divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount.

²³ Refers to all regular income received by the respondent during calendar year 2010 as the result of having been a member of a pension plan of one or more employers. It includes payments received from all annuities, including payments from a Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF), a matured Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP), and civil servants etc.

²⁴ Refers to all cash benefits received from federal, provincial, territorial or municipal governments during 2010. For example, OAS Old Age Security pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement, Allowance and Allowance for the Survivor, Canada Pension Plan or Quebec Pension Plan etc.

Composition of total income (100%)					
Employment income - As a % of total income	16.4%	13.4%	12.0%	12.5%	11.4%
Retirement pensions	29.9%	25.9%	30.6%	31.8%	31.7%
Government transfers - As a % of total income	41.1%	56.5%	48.8%	45.2%	50.3%
Other money income ²⁵ - As a % of total income	12.5%	4.1%	8.6%	10.5%	6.6%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 NHS Table Numbers: 99-014-X2011032 & 99-014-X2011041

As with the overall population, income data from the NHS suggest a significant income gender gap between seniors. Regardless of province of residence, men were more likely to have income, and higher median income, than women. In 2010, the median income of female seniors in Canada was approximately \$10,600 less than their male counterparts. Within the Atlantic Region the gender income gap was smallest in NL and largest in NS. In NL, the median income of male seniors was \$22,700 while that of females was \$16,979, a gap of \$5,700. By comparison, the median income for senior males and females in NS were \$29,093 and \$18,547, respectively, a gap of \$10,546. In both NB and PEI, an \$8,000 income gap between male and female seniors was recorded.

While the contribution of government transfer payments to total income varied across the Atlantic region, they nonetheless comprised the largest single source of income for seniors in the Region. Government transfer payments comprise a larger share of female seniors' total income as compared to their male counterpart, regardless of province of residence. In terms of public pensions, approximately 98% of seniors in Atlantic Canada received Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement (OAS/GIS) benefits in 2011, and 95% of seniors in the Region received Canada or Quebec Pension Plan benefits (CPP/QPP). A marginally higher proportion of females than males receive OAS benefits. By comparison, a smaller proportion of women than men are in receipt of CPP. The share of seniors receiving OAS benefit between 1990 and 2010 has remained steady, whereas the proportion in receipt of CPP has increased from 67% to 95%. Noteworthy is the increase in the percentage of females receiving CPP. In 1991, 55% of women and 83% of men had received CPP. By 2010, the share of female seniors receiving CPP rose to 82% and to 98% of male seniors. The rise in the share of females with CPP benefits coincides with the increase in their labour force participation rates.

Within the Region, transfer payments were the largest source of income for seniors in NL and accounted for approximately 56% of their total income in 2010. Government transfers payments was a major component of the income (67%) for female seniors, with the vast majority coming from CPP and OAS which made up 20.4% and 42% of their total income, respectively. The median benefits received were \$4,773 for CPP and \$8,670 for OAS/GIS. Each of these sources was received by approximately 90% of the female seniors. Male seniors in the province received slightly less than 50% of their total income in the form of transfer payments. OAS/GIS accounted for approximately 24% of their total income, while CPP made up just under 20%. In NL, the median benefit received by senior males was \$6,739 from CPP and \$7,231 from OAS.

²⁵ Other money income includes, for example, severance pay, alimony, child support, etc.

Table 8: Median Income of Seniors by Province and Gender, Atlantic Canada, 2010.

Median Income of Seniors	NL		PEI		NS		NB	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Median Total Income	\$22,700	\$16,979	\$26,389	\$18,141	\$29,093	\$18,547	\$25,994	\$17,781
Median OAS Benefit	\$7,231	\$8,670	\$6,234	\$6,285	\$6,233	\$6,238	\$6,237	\$6,945
Median CPP Benefit	\$6,739	\$4,773	\$6,932	\$5,572	\$7,384	\$5,704	\$7,004	\$5,413

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 NHS Table Numbers: 99-014-X2011032

Among the Atlantic Provinces, government transfer payments accounted for the smallest share of total income in NS. Senior females received approximately 54% of their income in the form of transfer payments; this was 15 percentage points higher than males. Thirty-one percent of females' income came from OAS/GIS with a median benefit of \$6,238, whereas OAS accounted for approximately 18% of males' income. The median OAS benefit was the same for males and females in NS. In 2010, CPP contributed to 18% of males' total income and to 21% of females' income. While CPP represented a slightly higher share of income for female seniors, the median benefit received was larger for males at \$7,384 as compared to \$5,704 received by females.

Benefits received from the OAS and CPP programs were the largest components of income for seniors in PEI, regardless of gender. Combined they represented 55.3% and 38% of total income received by senior females and males, respectively. The median benefit from OAS in PEI was similar for both sexes (\$6,240); however, male seniors received a slightly higher median benefit from CPP than females (\$6,932 versus \$5,572), a gap of \$360.

Similar to the other provinces in Atlantic Canada, government transfer payments made up a larger share of the total income of female seniors than senior males. In 2010, government transfer payments in the form of CPP and OAS accounted for 57.6% of the total income of the senior females and for 39.5% of senior males in NB. The median CPP benefit received by males was \$7,000, which is approximately \$1,600 more than that for their female counterparts.

Income from private pension plans made up the second largest share of senior's total income in both Atlantic Canada and nationally. Retirement pensions contributed to approximately 30% of seniors' total income in each of the Atlantic Provinces, except in NL where it accounted for a lower share of income (26%). Despite representing the second major source of income, unlike government transfers, a significantly smaller number of seniors have private retirement pensions in Atlantic Canada.

In 2010, the share of seniors in NL with a private retirement pension was approximately 44% or 11 percentage points below the share in the remaining Atlantic Provinces. Private pensions were received by 36% of female seniors in NL and the median amount was \$7,424, representing the lowest proportion and smallest amount within the Region. Just over half of males (54%) in NL had income from private pensions, with a median pension of \$14,446. In NS almost 65% of men had income derived from private pensions as compared to 50% of women, with a median amount of \$17,780 for men and \$8,913 for women. In PEI there was close to a 10 percentage point difference between the share of men and women with private pensions (60.7% versus 50.5%), the smallest gap within the Region. The majority of men in NB (63%) had income from private pensions, but less than half of women (48.6%) had a private

pension plan. As was the case across provinces, the \$7,932 median pension income received by women in NB was barely half of the \$15,448 received by men.

Incidence of Low Income

- ***The prevalence of low income is higher in Atlantic Canada than nationally.***
- ***A higher share of females experience low-income situations than males in Atlantic Canada.***

Low income can be measured in several different ways in household surveys. For the standard products of the NHS, a relative measure is employed: the after-tax low-income measure (LIM-AT), which does not apply to the population on reserves or in the territories.²⁶ As such, the discussion which follows refers to the off-reserve Aboriginal population living in one of Canada's ten provinces.

According to estimates from the NHS, 69,910, or 19.7%, of seniors in Atlantic Canada were living below the LIM-AT in 2010 as compared to 13.4% nationally. Similarly, the prevalence of low income was higher for the population aged 64 and under in the Region as compared to the national average (16.9% versus 15.1%). Within the Region, NL reported the highest incidence of seniors living in low-income households, while NS had the lowest share.

Table 9: Incidence of Low Income by Province and Gender, Atlantic Canada, 2010.

Incidence of Low Income	NL		PEI		NS		NB	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total Population								
Seniors 65 +	17.8%	26.1%	16.0%	24.8%	14.5%	20.9%	15.3%	23.7%
Seniors 65 - 74	16.6%	22.0%	13.2%	20.3%	15.1%	17.6%	15.2%	20.1%
Seniors 75 +	20.2%	32.2%	20.2%	30.7%	13.7%	25.1%	15.5%	28.1%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 NHS Table Number: 99-014-X2011043.

Just over 23% of female seniors in Atlantic Canada were living in low income households in 2010, seven percentage points higher than male seniors (15.6%). Nationally, the gender gap among seniors was marginally smaller (16.3% versus 10%).

Both nationally and in Atlantic Canada, poverty rates among the elderly tend to be highest among women, particularly widows over the age of 75. Since pension allowances are generally related to employment history, higher poverty among older women is primarily the result of lower wages, a higher incidence of part-time work, and career gaps during women's working lives.²⁷ In addition, women have a longer life expectancy and may not have been able to save enough throughout their working lives to finance their senior years.

²⁶ Individuals are defined as having low income if the after-tax income of their household falls below 50% of the median adjusted Canadian household after-tax income in 2010.

²⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Section 3: Issues and Challenges

Tapping into an Underutilized Segment of the Labour Force

The Atlantic Region and Canada are in the middle of a major demographic shift. The proportion of the population aged 60 and over is expected to increase from one-quarter of the Atlantic Region's population in 2013 to approximately 31% by 2023, and rising to 35% by 2031. The population aging process will be pronounced between 2011, when the first of the baby boomers began to turn 65 years of age, and 2031, when all of the baby boom generation will have reached 65.²⁸

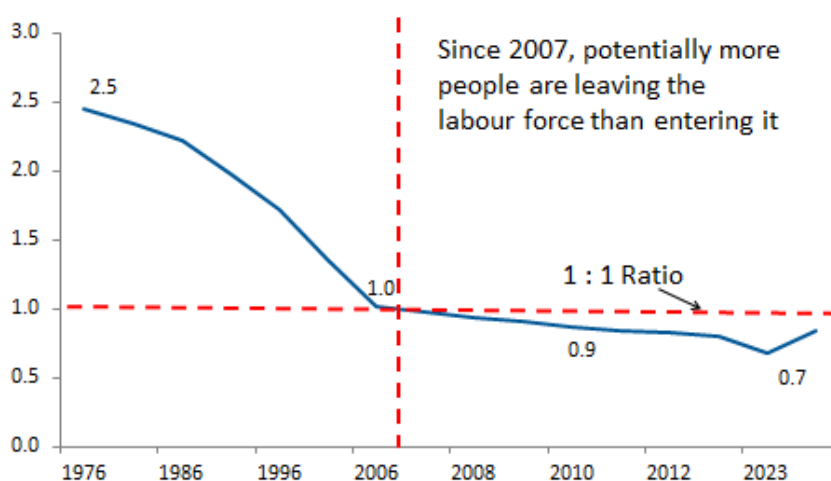
Not only is the Atlantic Region's population aging, but its workforce is also aging. Over the past twenty years the age composition of the Region's labour force has changed significantly with the youth's (aged 15 to 24) relative share declining, while the relative share of workers in the 55 and over age category has increased by almost threefold. Workers aged 55 and over accounted for 7.7% of Atlantic Canada's labour force in 1993; however, their relative share increased to 21.2% by 2013. During the same period the share of youth in the labour force declined from 19% to 14.5%. The changing age-composition towards older workers is more noticeable in Atlantic Canada than at the national level. Between 1993 and 2013, the share of Canadian workers aged 55 and over in the labour force practically doubled from 9.3% to 18.8%. By comparison, the relative share of youth nationally in the labour market declined from 17.3% to 14.9% over the same twenty-year period.

Since 2007, Atlantic Canadians aged 55 to 64 who have already or will soon be able to leave the labour force have outnumbered new entrants aged 15 to 24. In 1976, there were 25 youths in the Region for every ten individuals in the 55 to 64 age group. By 2013, this had declined to only eight youth for every ten people aged 55 to 64, and demographic projections suggest it will continue to decrease over the next ten years. Given the large number of Atlantic baby boomers who will possibly be retiring within the next twenty years, the potential exists for significant labour shortages within a wide range of industries and occupations. The effects could be harsh, since both small and large businesses will be forced to rely on a dwindling workforce. This could lead to reduced productivity, slower or declining economic growth, lower per-capita income, and a decrease in the quality of life in Atlantic Canada relative to that of other parts of Canada and other countries.²⁹

²⁸ The baby boomers are individuals born between 1946 and 1965.

²⁹ The Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

Figure 4: Ratio of the Number of Persons Aged 15 to 24 to the Number of Persons Aged 55 to 64: Atlantic Canada 1976 to 2031



Source: Statistics Canada, Cansim, Table Number: 280-0002; Population Projections, Catalogue number 91-520-XIE, M1 medium growth scenario

In an aging society with a declining workforce which is not replacing itself, one way to help mitigate labour and skill shortages is to tap into one of the traditionally underutilized pools of labour, the population aged 65 and over (seniors). In 2013, there were 395,000 Atlantic Canadians over the age of 65, of whom 45,000 (11.5%) were in the labour force, up from less than 4% twenty years earlier. However, seniors currently account for less than 4% of Atlantic Canada's labour force and for less than 2% of Canada's overall labour force.

Seniors are better educated than in the past; more than half of Atlantic Canadians who turn 65 over the next decade will have a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or university degree. Seniors are also living longer and lead more active and healthier lives than did previous generations of seniors. According to the Conference Board of Canada, the average Canadian in 1961 could expect to live to age 71 which is ten years less than the estimated life expectancy in 2009.³⁰ As such, the prospect of a longer, healthier life makes postponing retirement a desirable option for some. Many seniors wish to work beyond the traditional retirement age and consider work as part of their life balance, while others work because of financial necessity. A trend reversal towards early retirement has been evident in Canada since the late-1990s. At that time, the average retirement age reached a low of 61 years and now stands at 63 years in 2013.

The skills, knowledge, and experience seniors possess provide employers with an opportunity to retain, recruit, and re-engage older workers. Nevertheless, misperceptions and negative attitudes towards older workers continue to exist and act as barriers preventing seniors from participating in the labour force.³¹ One such common misconception is that older workers are less productive. However, recent research has shown that intellectual capacity and the ability to perform routine or repetitive tasks are

³⁰ Conference Board of Canada, 2013.

³¹ National Seniors Council.

not influenced by age. If physical strength is a key component of job performance, a slight decrease in productivity can occur since physical strength diminishes with age.³²

The work-life balance is an important factor in determining retirement decisions. In order for employers to attract and retain seniors in the workplace, many will need to make changes in their human resource policies and practices to enable work patterns to become more flexible. In a 2009 work-life balance study conducted by Uriarte-Landa and Hébert, over 25% of Canadian retirees reported that they would have continued to work part time or shorter/fewer days, while another 6% would have done so if suitable caregiving arrangements were in place.³³ Exploring alternative work arrangements, such as reduced hours of work, compressed work weeks, and unpaid short- or long-term leave, would allow older workers to slowly transition into retirement. However, studies suggest that, thus far, few Canadian employers have implemented these employment arrangements.³⁴ Employers will benefit by having access to the knowledge and skills of older workers and by saving on recruitment and training costs. Given the right conditions, seniors and the upcoming group of seniors may choose to delay retirement and continue contributing to the health of the Region's economy.

Conclusion

The aging of the population and its implications are among the most currently discussed and debated topics. Some analysts predict there will be severe consequences in terms of the economic and social impacts of the demographic change (significant pressures on public services and finances and labour market shortages); others argue that we are "well-equipped to face this social and demographic phenomenon."³⁵

Seniors currently account for almost 18% of Atlantic Canada's population. By 2031, Statistics Canada projections suggest that seniors will account for approximately 28% of the Atlantic Region's total population.

The rising levels of educational attainment among seniors, coupled with the current trend towards delayed retirement and the potential for greater flexibility in terms of alternative work arrangements on the part of employers, will help mitigate the consequences of a shrinking labour force and contribute to the economic and social health of Atlantic Canada's economy. Although seniors represent a potential pool of under-represented workers in the labour market, a number of challenges exist that could limit their full utilization in the labour market such as area of residence, language skills, and literacy levels.

³² Sharpe.

³³ Uriarte-Landa and Hébert.

³⁴ Conference Board of Canada, 2007.

³⁵ Statistics Canada, 2006 page 7.

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.*

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For information on the Labour Force Survey, the 2011 National Household Survey, and the 2006 Census please visit the Statistics Canada Web site at: www.statcan.gc.ca

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ⁱ CMAs and CAs in Atlantic Canada include:

NL: St. John’s, Bay Roberts, Grand Falls-Windsor, Corner Brook;

PEI: Charlottetown, Summerside;

NS: Halifax, Kentville, Truro, New Glasgow, Cape Breton ;

NB: Moncton, Saint John, Fredericton, Bathurst, Miramichi, Campbellton (New Brunswick part), and Edmundston.