

ALBERTA
SOUTHWEST

STAVELY

Economic Report

Table of Contents

Employment Rate	4
Business Establishments	5
Employment by Sector	6
Establishments by Sector	7
Establishments by Size	8
Household After-Tax Income	9
Individual After-Tax Income	10
Individual Employment Income	11
Labour Force Participation Rate	12
Labour Force Status	13
Work Activity	14
Employed Residents by Occupation	15

Executive Summary

Stavely presents the picture of a small local economy that strengthened in labour market participation between 2016 and 2021, while retaining the limits and unevenness typical of a modest business base. Employment and participation both moved up over the period, with more residents working and fewer outside the labour force than before. The work-activity profile also shifted in the same direction, as full-year, full-time work increased and the number of people who did not work declined. These changes suggest a firmer local employment position by 2021 than five years earlier, even though the town was still not among the stronger labour market centres in its wider regional comparison.

That improvement sits alongside a business structure that remains small, highly concentrated at the micro scale, and somewhat volatile. The number of establishments rebounded in 2025 after a sharp drop in 2024, but the recovery was only partial and left the town below earlier counts. Most businesses operate without employees, and only a small number fall into even the lower paid-staff size ranges, pointing to an economy shaped largely by owner-operated firms and very small enterprises. Within that base, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting accounts for the largest share of establishments, while the employment picture is more spread out. Retail trade, manufacturing, and construction are among the largest sources of jobs, with public administration also contributing a visible share. This contrast suggests that the sectors with the most businesses are not exactly the same as those carrying the largest job counts, reinforcing the sense of a diverse but limited local economy rather than one dominated by a single large employer.

Income patterns add to that restrained profile. Household income is spread across several bands, with the strongest presence in the middle ranges rather than at either extreme. Individual after-tax and employment income are similarly concentrated in lower and middle brackets, with counts thinning steadily at higher levels. Stavely therefore comes across as a town with improving labour market engagement and a mixed sector base, but one still defined by small-scale enterprise, modest incomes, and an economic structure that is broad in composition without being large in scale.

Employment Rate

Stavely’s employment rate reached 47.5% in 2021, up from 41.1% in 2016. That is a 6.4-point increase over five years, equal to 15.6% growth.

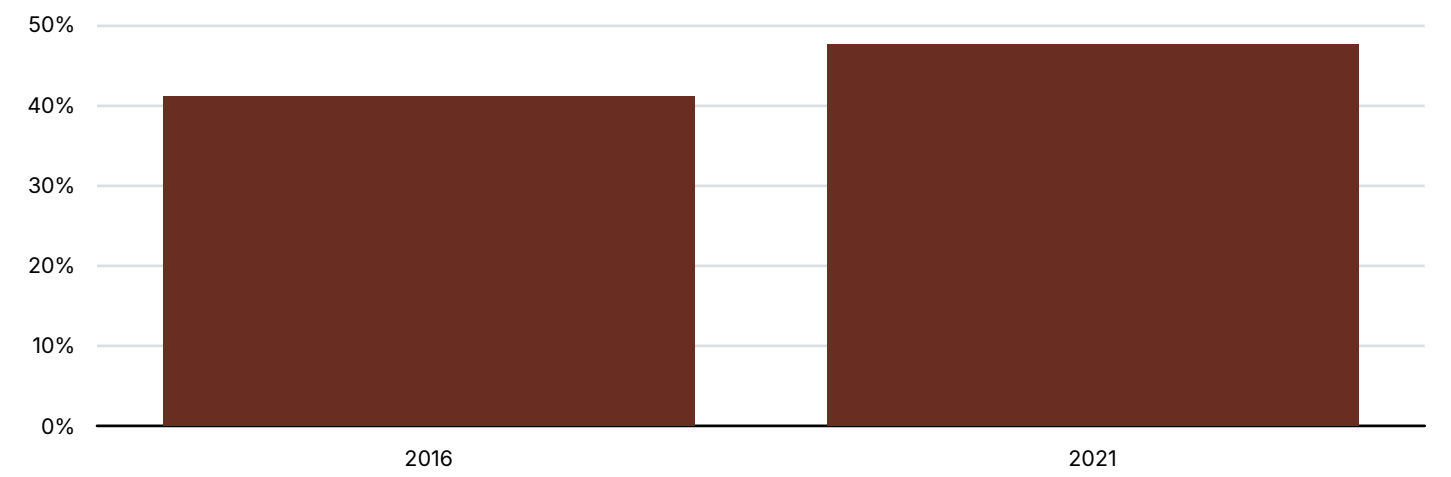
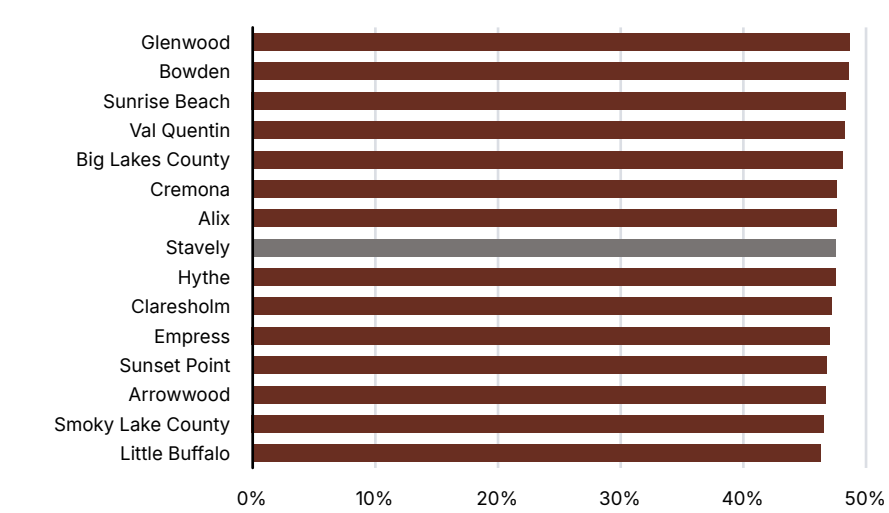


Figure 1.1: Shows the share of the working-age population that is employed. It helps indicate overall labour market health and how fully local talent is being used. (Stavely, 2016-2021)¹

Stavely’s employment rate, measured for the labour force aged 15 years and over, rose between 2016 and 2021. The pattern is a clear improvement in the share of the working-age population that was employed. In 2016, the employment rate was 41.1%. By 2021, it had increased to 47.5%, a gain of 6.4 percentage points. The 5-year change is reported as 15.6%. The available data show steady upward movement over the period rather than volatility. With only two time points, the trend is straightforward: employment participation strengthened from one census to the next. Taken together, the figures point to a firmer labour market position in 2021 than in 2016, at least on this measure.



Stavely’s employment rate, measured among the labour force aged 15 and over, was 47.5% in 2021. That was up from 41.1% in 2016, a 15.6% increase over five years. Even with that gain, Stavely remained below several nearby communities, including Nanton at 58.4% and Cardston County at 65.1%. It was above Hill Spring at 30.8% and Piikani 147 at 33.2%. The pattern places Stavely in the middle of the regional range: improving, but not among the higher-employment areas.

Figure 1.2: Comparison of Employment Rate with other locations (Stavely, 2021)¹

Business Establishments

Stavely had 120 business establishments in 2025, up 9.1% from 2024. That followed a 37.1% drop the year before, after 175 establishments in 2023 and 141 in 2022.

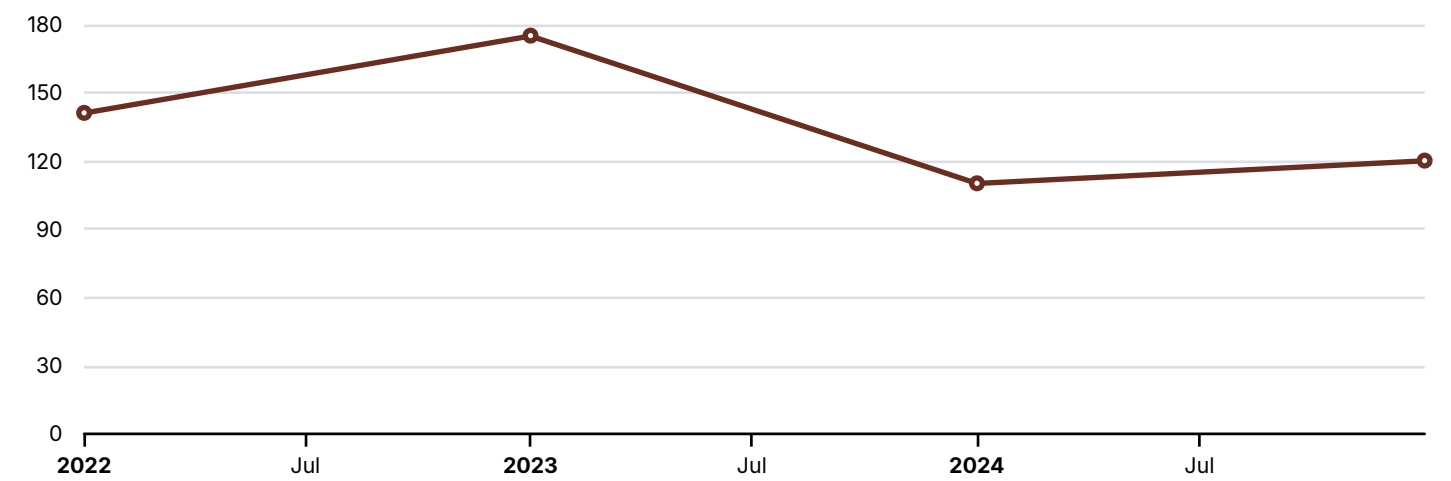
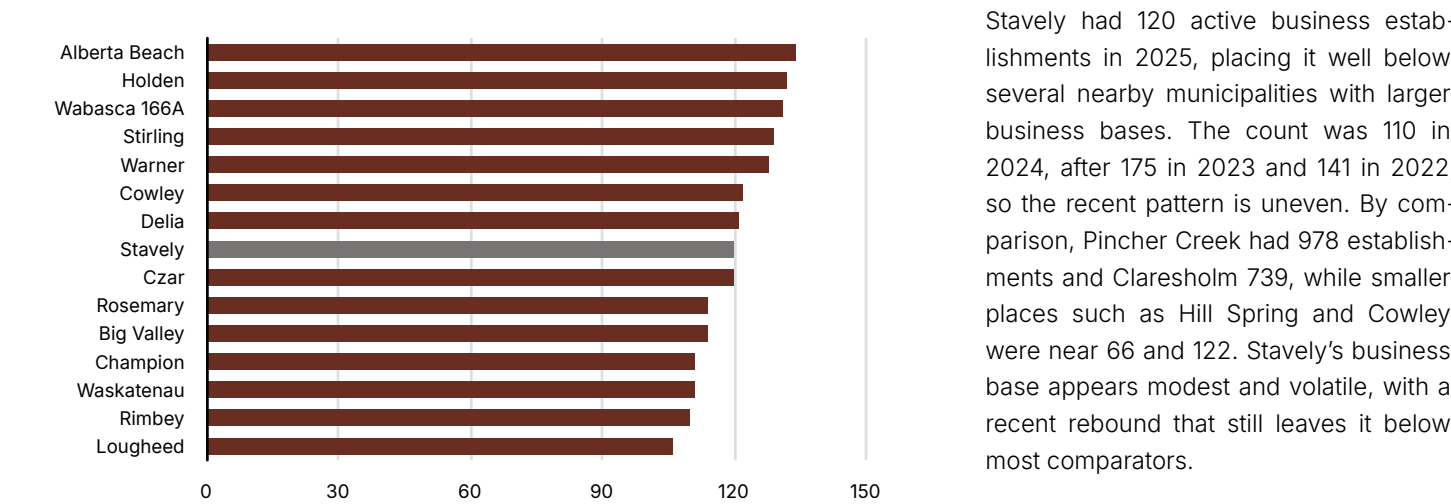


Figure 2.1: Shows the total number of active business establishments in the area, including those without employees. It helps indicate the scale and diversity of the local business base. (Stavely, 2022-2025)²

Stavely’s business establishment count has been volatile over the last four years, with a sharp rise followed by a notable decline and a partial recovery. The town had 141 businesses in 2022, increased to 175 in 2023, fell to 110 in 2024, and then edged up to 120 in 2025. That means the latest count remains below the 2022 and 2023 levels, even after the 9.1% increase in the most recent year. The 2024 drop of 37.1% was the largest shift in the period. The pattern points to a small local business base that has changed quickly rather than steadily.



Stavely had 120 active business establishments in 2025, placing it well below several nearby municipalities with larger business bases. The count was 110 in 2024, after 175 in 2023 and 141 in 2022, so the recent pattern is uneven. By comparison, Pincher Creek had 978 establishments and Claresholm 739, while smaller places such as Hill Spring and Cowley were near 66 and 122. Stavely’s business base appears modest and volatile, with a recent rebound that still leaves it below most comparators.

Figure 2.2: Comparison of Business Establishments with other locations (Stavely, 2025)²

Employment by Sector

Retail trade employed the most people in Stavely in 2025 at 25, followed by manufacturing at 20 and construction at 19. Agriculture fell to 9, while public administration held at 15.

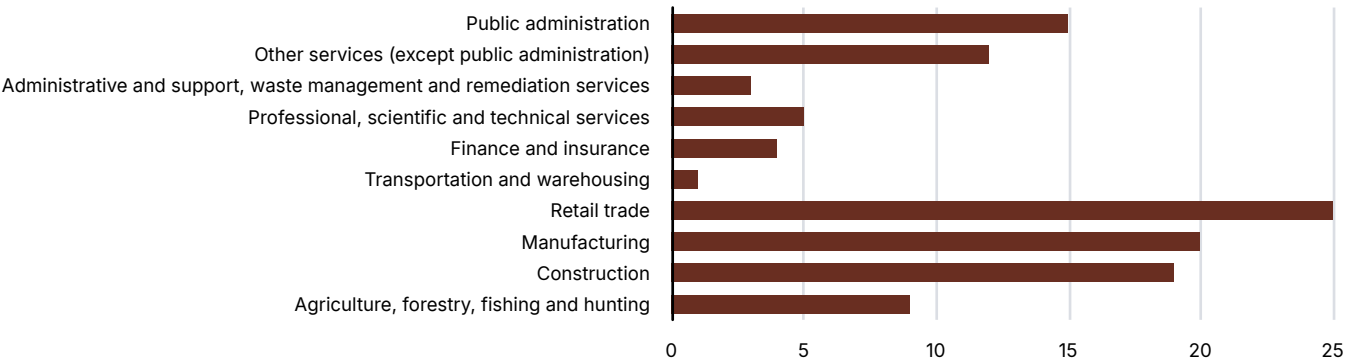


Figure 3.1: Shows how employment is distributed across industry sectors. It helps indicate which sectors account for the largest share of local jobs. (Stavely, 2025)³

In 2025, employment in Stavely was spread across a small set of sectors, with retail trade the largest at 25 people. Manufacturing followed with 20, and construction with 19. Public administration employed 15 people, while other services accounted for 12 and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting for 9. Recent changes were uneven. Professional, scientific and technical services grew the fastest, up 66.7% year over year, while agriculture fell 47.1% and other services declined 29.4%. Several sectors were flat, including retail trade, transportation and warehousing, administrative and support services, and public administration.

Stavely's 2025 employment profile is spread across several sectors, with no single industry dominating the local job base. Retail trade is the largest employer at 25 people, followed by manufacturing at 20 and construction at 19. Public administration accounts for 15 jobs, while other services total 12 and agriculture 9. Several smaller sectors add to the mix, including professional, scientific and technical services at 5 and finance and insurance at 4. Transportation and warehousing has just 1 job. The pattern shows a varied but modest employment base, with changes ranging from growth in professional services to sharp declines in agriculture.



Figure 3.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Naics - Retail trade (Stavely)³

Establishments by Sector

Stavely’s business base is led by agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting with 45 establishments in 2025, up 15.4% year over year. Real estate follows at 17, while construction and professional services each have 8.

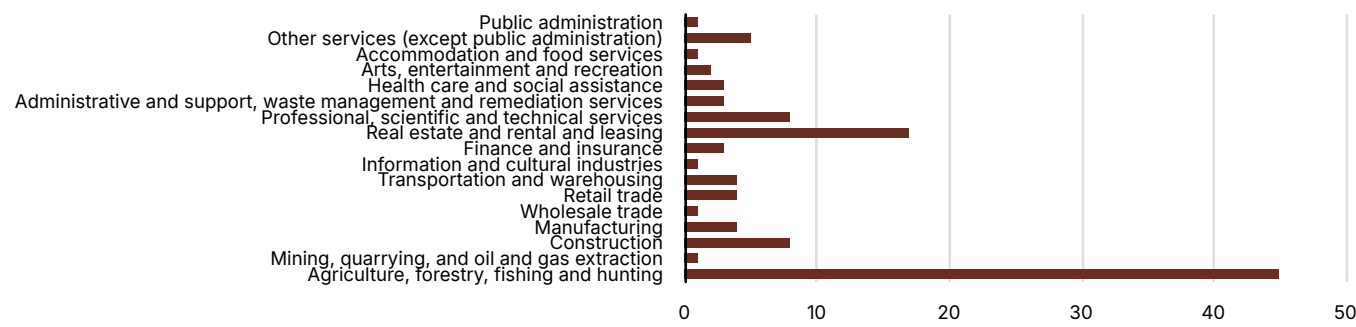


Figure 4.1: Shows how business establishments are distributed across sectors. It helps indicate the sector mix of the local business base. (Stavely, 2025)²

In 2025, Stavely’s business base was concentrated in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, with 45 establishments, the largest count by sector. Real estate and rental followed at 17, while construction and professional, scientific and technical services each had 8. Several smaller sectors also grew, including manufacturing, retail trade, transportation and warehousing, finance and insurance, and health care and social assistance. Declines were limited to mining, wholesale trade, administrative support, and accommodation and food services. The pattern shows a small local economy led by primary-sector activity, with a mix of services spread across fewer establishments.

Stavely’s business base in 2025 is concentrated in a small number of sectors, with agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting clearly dominant at 45 establishments. Real estate and rental and leasing is the next largest category at 17, while construction and professional, scientific and technical services each account for 8. Retail trade and transportation and warehousing each have 4 businesses, showing a thinner middle tier. Several smaller sectors are steady or volatile. Manufacturing doubled to 4 establishments, arts, entertainment and recreation rose to 2, while accommodation and food services fell to 1. Source: Statistics Canada, Business Register.



Figure 4.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Naics - Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (Stavely)²

Establishments by Size

Stavely’s establishments remain concentrated in firms without employees, at 97 in 2025, up 9.0% from 2024. The 1 to 4 employee group rose to 17, while 5 to 9 employee firms fell to 1.

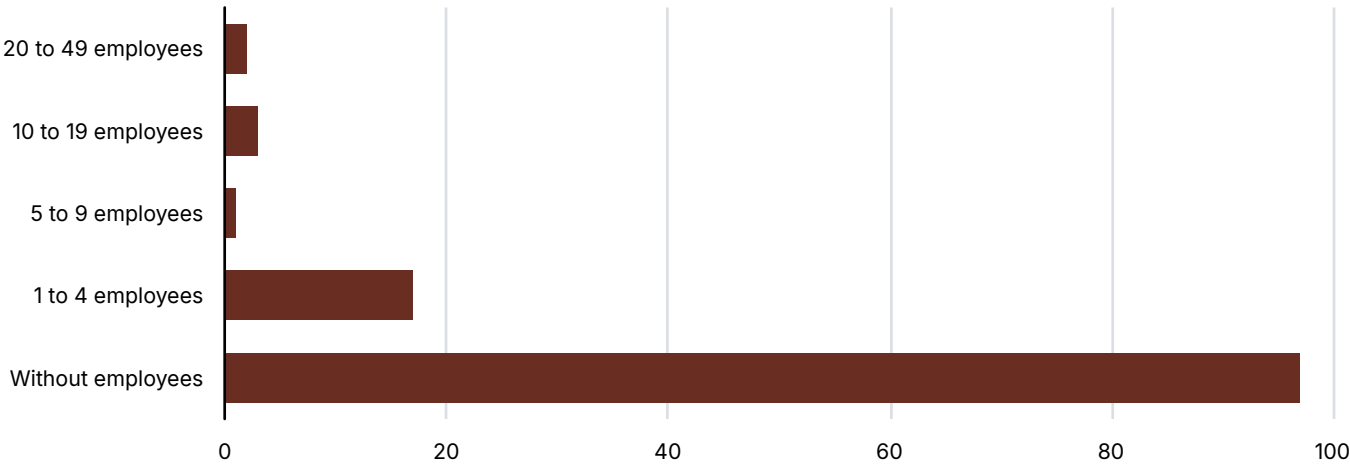
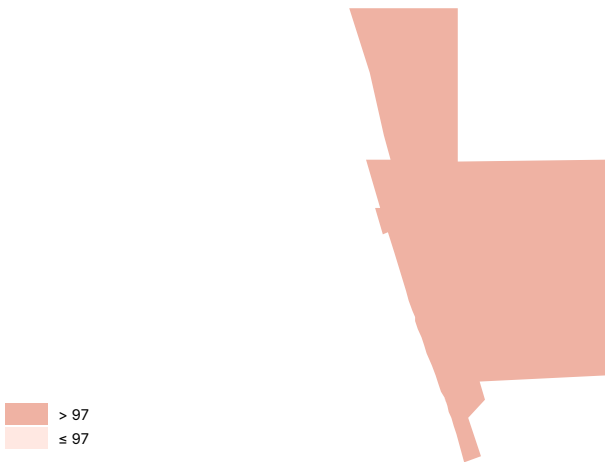


Figure 5.1: Shows how businesses are distributed by number of employees. It helps indicate whether the local economy is dominated by very small, small, or larger firms. (Stavely, 2025)²

In Stavely, the 2025 business base is led by very small establishments. Businesses without employees account for 97 locations, well ahead of the 17 firms with 1 to 4 employees. Smaller paid-staff firms show mixed recent movement: the 1 to 4 employee group rose 30.8% over the past year, while without-employees establishments increased 9.0%. Mid-sized counts are limited, with 1 firm in the 5 to 9 range after a 66.7% decline, and 3 in the 10 to 19 range and 2 in the 20 to 49 range, both unchanged.



Stavely’s business base in 2025 is concentrated in very small establishments. Businesses without employees account for the largest group at 97, followed by 17 firms with 1 to 4 employees. Much fewer establishments fall into the 5 to 9 employee range, with 1 business, while there are 3 firms with 10 to 19 employees and 2 with 20 to 49 employees. The pattern points to a local economy made up mainly of microbusinesses and owner-operated firms.

Figure 5.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Business Establishment Size - Without employees (Stavely)²

Household After-Tax Income

Stavely’s largest household income group in 2021 was \$70,000 to \$79,999 at 30 households, doubling from 15 in 2016. The 60,000 to 69,999 and 80,000 to 89,999 groups followed with 30 and 25 households.

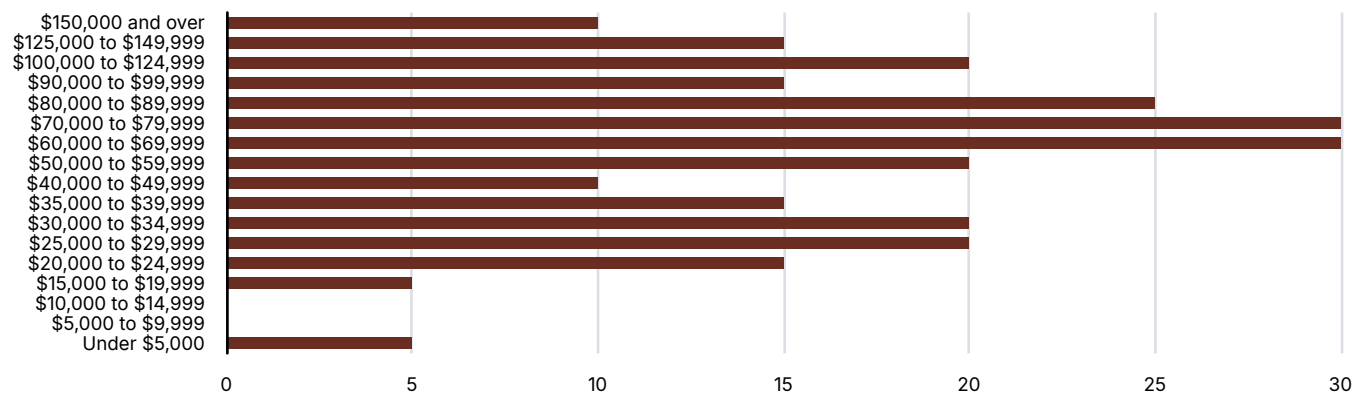


Figure 6.1: Shows household income after taxes across income groups. It helps indicate the resources households have available for day-to-day living after taxes are paid. (Stavely, 2021)¹

In Stavely, household after-tax income in 2021 was spread across many brackets, with no single group dominating. The largest counts were in the \$60,000 to \$69,999 and \$70,000 to \$79,999 ranges, at 30 households each. Lower-income brackets were thinner, while the top end was also modest, with 10 households at \$150,000 and over. Changes over five years were mixed, including growth in the \$70,000 to \$79,999 and \$150,000 and over groups.

In 2021, Stavely’s household after-tax income profile was spread across many income bands, with the largest counts in the \$60,000 to \$79,999 range at 30 households in each band. Smaller counts appeared at the bottom and top, including 5 households under \$5,000 and 10 households at \$150,000 and over. The pattern suggests a middle-weight income structure with some presence at higher brackets.



Figure 6.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Income Group Household - \$60,000 to \$69,999 (Stavely)¹

Individual After-Tax Income

In Stavely, the largest after-tax income group was \$20,000 to \$29,999 with 210 people. Counts then declined across higher brackets, reaching 10 people in each of the \$90,000 to \$124,999 ranges and above.

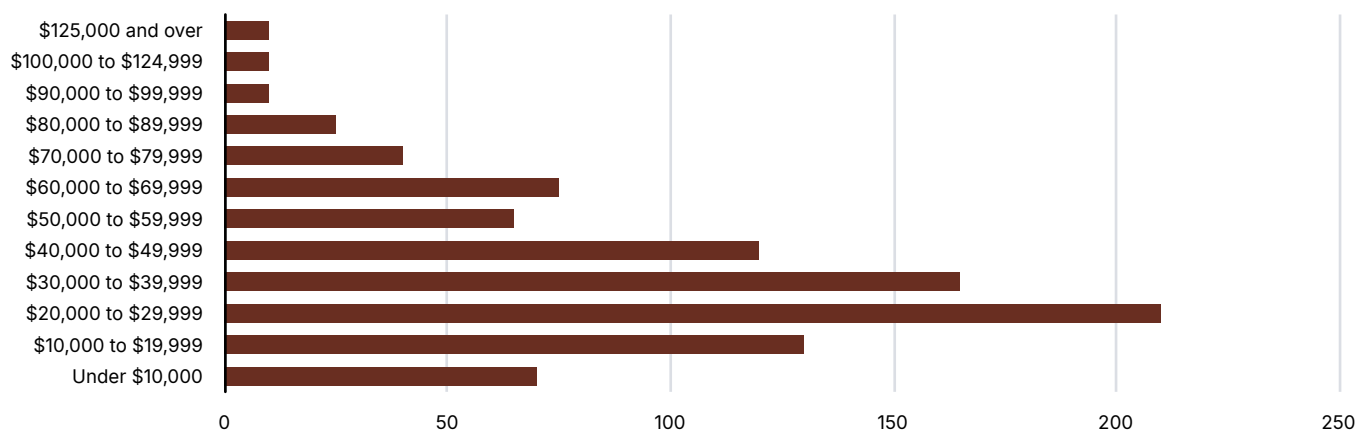


Figure 7.1: Shows individual after-tax income across income groups. It helps indicate the level of disposable income people have after taxes are paid. (Stavely, 2021)¹

In Stavely, individual after-tax income in 2021 was concentrated in the middle and lower-middle income groups for residents age 15 and over in private households. The distribution suggests a modest income profile, with the largest counts clustered below \$40,000. The biggest group was \$20,000 to \$29,999, with 210 people. That was followed by \$30,000 to \$39,999 at 165 and \$10,000 to \$19,999 at 130. Smaller counts appeared as incomes rose: 120 people were in the \$40,000 to \$49,999 range, while 10 people were in each of the \$90,000 to \$99,999, \$100,000 to \$124,999, and \$125,000 and over groups. Higher-income categories were comparatively limited, and the distribution thinned steadily above \$50,000.

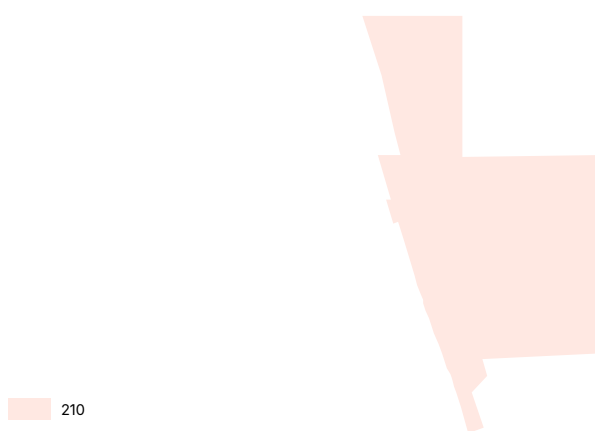


Figure 7.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Income Group Individual - \$20,000 to \$29,999 (Stavely)¹

In 2021, Stavely's after-tax income profile was concentrated in lower and middle bands. The largest group was \$20,000 to \$29,999, with 210 people. Counts then fell steadily above \$30,000: 165 in the \$30,000 to \$39,999 range, 120 in \$40,000 to \$49,999, and 65 in \$50,000 to \$59,999. Higher incomes were less common, with 40 people at \$70,000 to \$79,999 and only 10 in each of the \$90,000 to \$99,999, \$100,000 to \$124,999, and \$125,000-and-over groups. The pattern suggests a modest disposable-income distribution, with most residents clustered below \$50,000 after tax.

Individual Employment Income

In Stavely, the largest income group was under \$5,000, with 100 people. Counts then fell across higher brackets, including 85 people in the \$30,000 to \$39,999 range and 15 people earning \$125,000 and over.

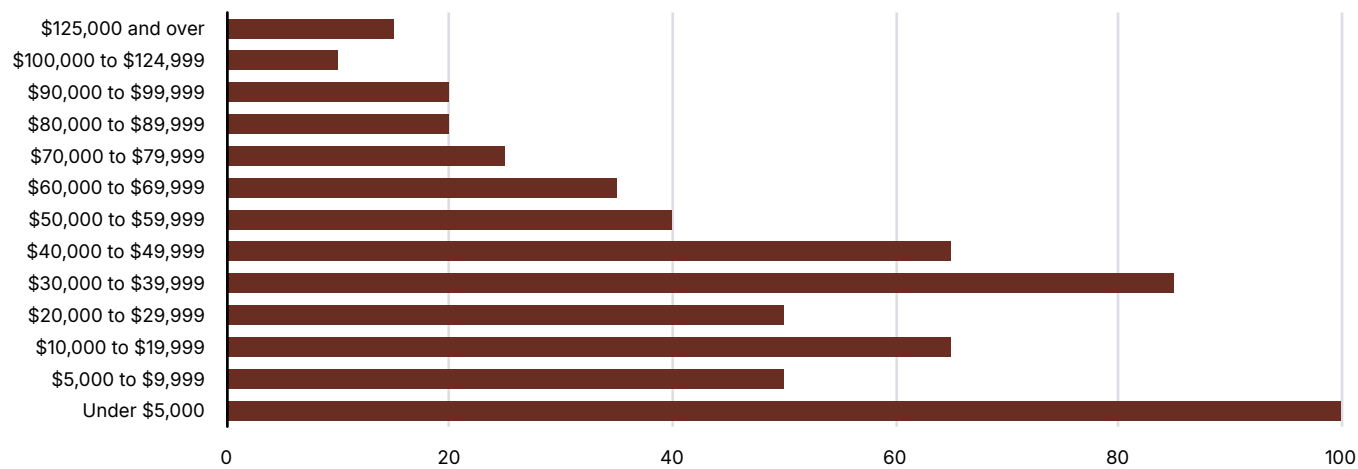
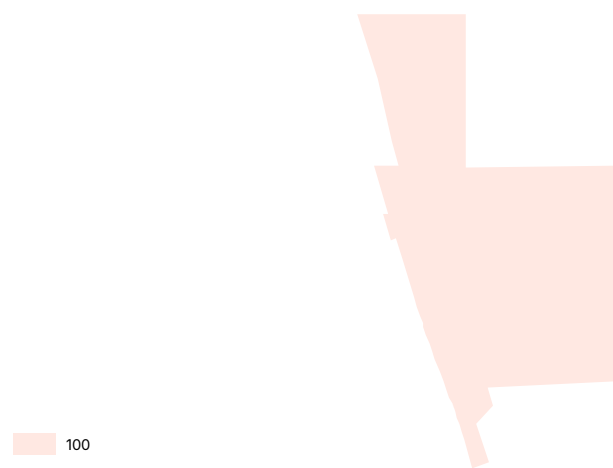


Figure 8.1: Shows individual employment income across income groups. It helps indicate how earnings from work are distributed among residents. (Stavely, 2021)¹

In 2021, individual employment income in Stavely was concentrated in the lower and middle ranges, with the largest group earning under \$5,000. The next biggest brackets were \$30,000 to \$39,999, at 85 people, and \$10,000 to \$19,999, at 65 people. The distribution thinned steadily at higher incomes: 40 people were in the \$50,000 to \$59,999 range, 20 were in both the \$80,000 to \$89,999 and \$90,000 to \$99,999 ranges, and 15 were at \$125,000 and over. Only 10 people were in the \$100,000 to \$124,999 bracket.



Stavely's 2021 individual employment income profile is spread across lower and middle ranges, with 100 people under \$5,000 and 85 in the \$30,000 to \$39,999 band. Only 15 reported \$125,000 and over. Counts then taper through the upper brackets: 40 in \$50,000 to \$59,999, 25 in \$70,000 to \$79,999, and 10 in \$100,000 to \$124,999. The pattern suggests a modest income distribution rather than concentration at the top.

Figure 8.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Income Group Individual - Under \$5,000 (Stavely)¹

Labour Force Participation Rate

Stavely's labour force participation rate reached 56.6% in 2021, up from 45.6% in 2016. The five-year change was 24.1%, showing a clear rise in labour market engagement.

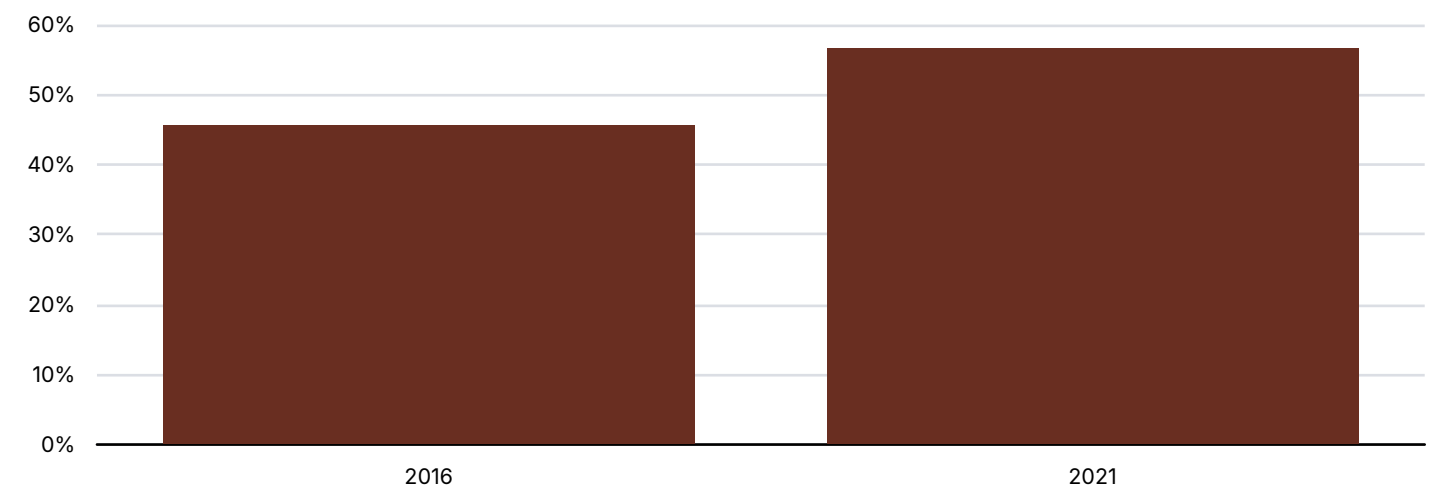
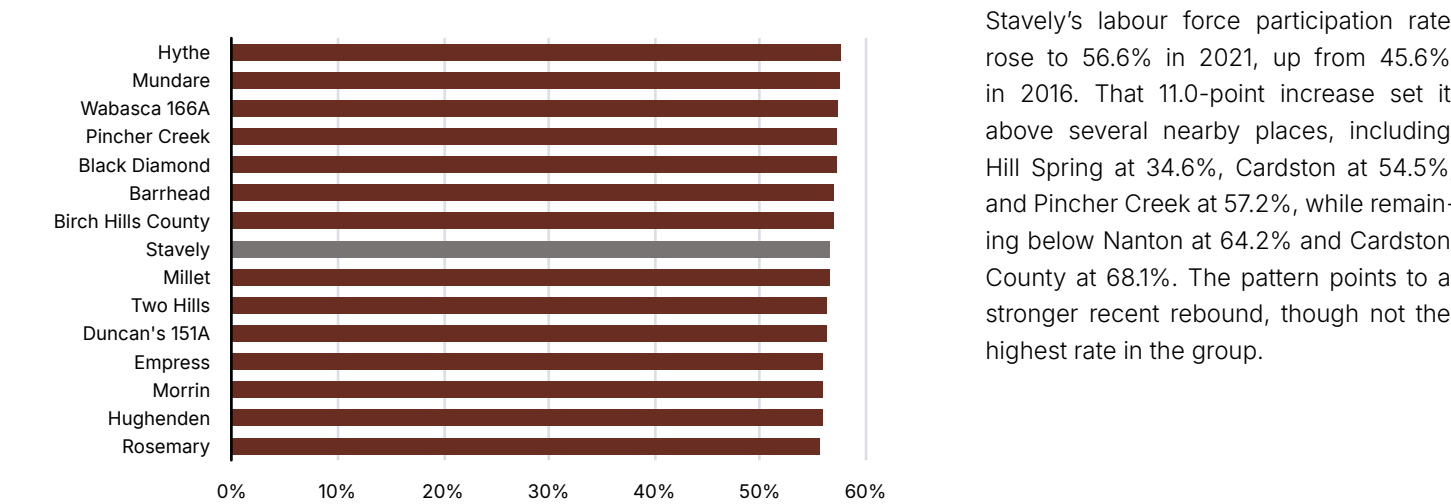


Figure 9.1: Shows the share of the working-age population that is employed or actively looking for work. It helps indicate the level of labour market engagement. (Stavely, 2016-2021)¹

Stavely's labour force participation rate rose sharply between the 2016 and 2021 censuses, pointing to a stronger level of labour market engagement among the total population. The rate was 45.6% in 2016 and 56.6% in 2021, a gain of 11.0 percentage points. The five-year change is listed as 24.1%, which matches the direction of that increase. With only two time points available, the clearest pattern is recent growth rather than a longer history of fluctuation. The data show a notable upward shift over the period, but do not explain why it occurred.



Stavely's labour force participation rate rose to 56.6% in 2021, up from 45.6% in 2016. That 11.0-point increase set it above several nearby places, including Hill Spring at 34.6%, Cardston at 54.5%, and Pincher Creek at 57.2%, while remaining below Nanton at 64.2% and Cardston County at 68.1%. The pattern points to a stronger recent rebound, though not the highest rate in the group.

Figure 9.2: Comparison of Labour Force Participation Rate with other locations (Stavely, 2021)¹

Labour Force Status

Employed residents were the largest group in Stavely in 2021 at 235 people, up from 185 in 2016. Those not in the labour force fell to 215, while unemployed residents rose to 45.

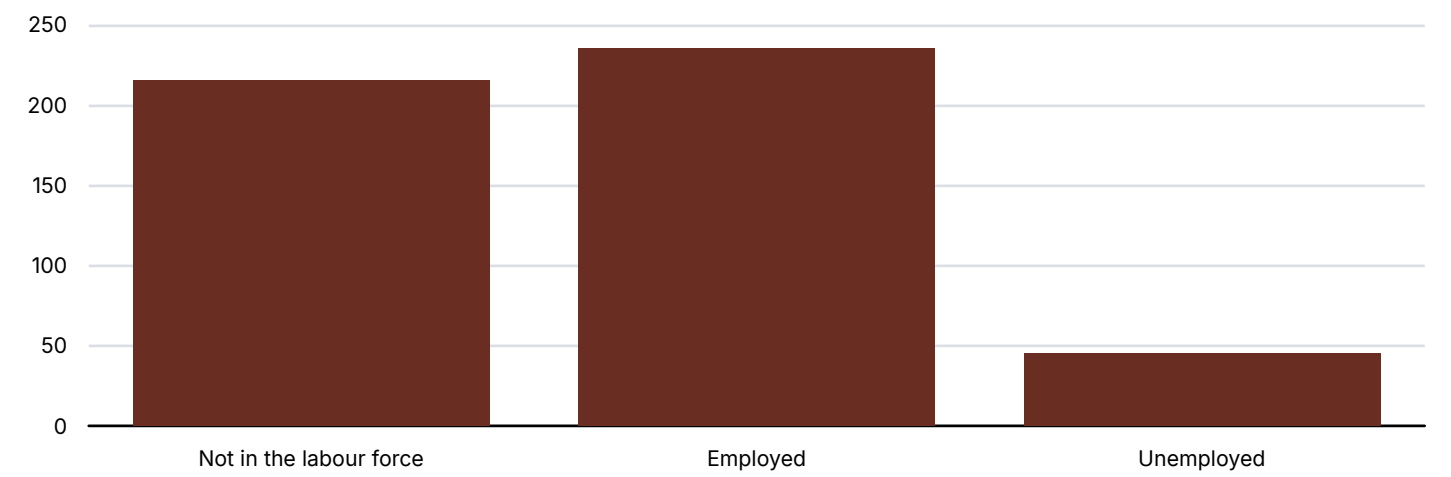
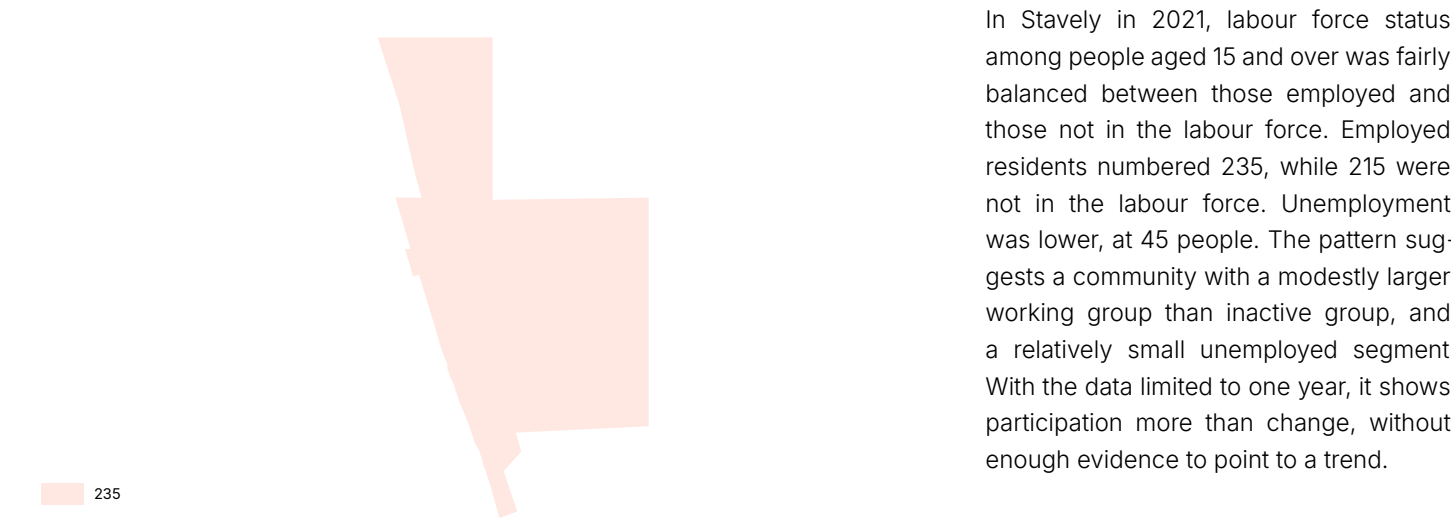


Figure 10.1: Shows whether residents are employed, unemployed, or not in the labour force. It helps indicate how people are participating in the labour market. (Stavely, 2021)¹

In 2021, Stavely's labour force status profile for residents aged 15 years and over was fairly balanced between work and non-participation. Employed residents made up the largest group at 235 people, while 215 were not in the labour force and 45 were unemployed. That means employment was only slightly ahead of non-participation, with unemployment a much smaller segment of the population. The total across these categories was 495 people. Because the dataset provides a single year rather than a time series, it gives a snapshot rather than a trend. Within that snapshot, Stavely shows a modestly employment-oriented profile, but not one dominated by labour force participation.



In Stavely in 2021, labour force status among people aged 15 and over was fairly balanced between those employed and those not in the labour force. Employed residents numbered 235, while 215 were not in the labour force. Unemployment was lower, at 45 people. The pattern suggests a community with a modestly larger working group than inactive group, and a relatively small unemployed segment. With the data limited to one year, it shows participation more than change, without enough evidence to point to a trend.

Figure 10.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Labour Force Status - Employed (Stavely)¹

Work Activity

Stavely’s largest work-activity group in 2021 was people who did not work, at 195, down 13.3% from 2016. Worked full year full time rose to 150, a 50.0% increase, while part-year or part-time reached 145.

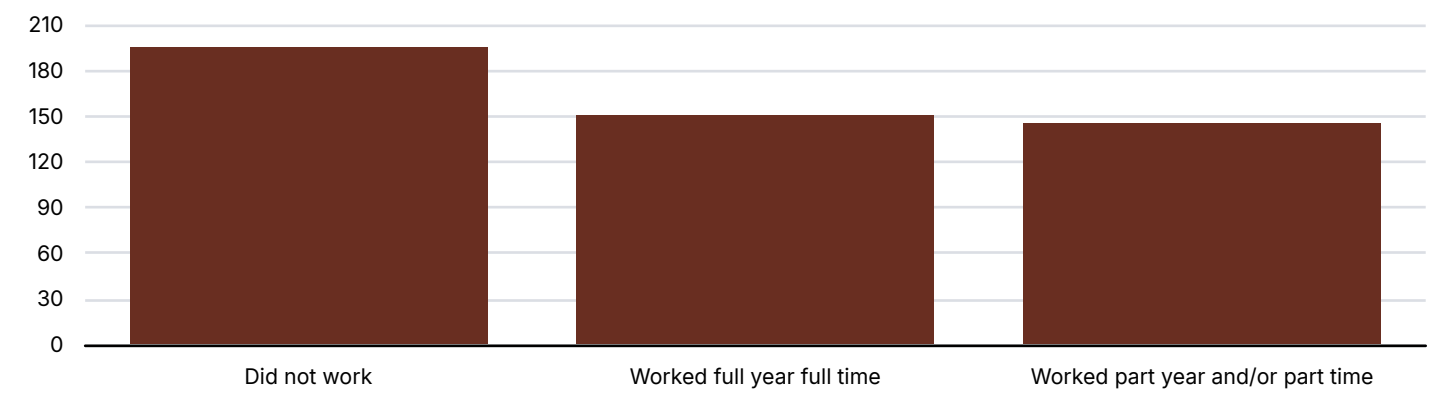


Figure 11.1: Shows the amount of work activity people had during the reference period. It helps indicate attachment to work over the year, not just at a single point in time. (Stavely, 2021)¹

In Stavely, work activity in 2021 was split between people who did not work and those with some connection to employment. Among the population aged 15 and over, 195 people did not work, down 13.3% over five years. By contrast, 150 people worked full year full time, up 50%, and 145 worked part year and/or part time, up 16%. The pattern suggests a shift toward more sustained work participation alongside a smaller non-working group.

In Stavely, work activity in 2021 was split fairly evenly across the three reported groups for the population aged 15 years and over, but “did not work” was the largest category at 195 people. Another 150 people worked full year full time, while 145 worked part year and/or part time. The five-year changes point in different directions: those who did not work fell by 13.3%, full-year full-time work rose by 50%, and part-year or part-time work rose by 16%. That mix suggests a modest shift toward more sustained work activity.



Figure 11.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Work Activity - Did not work (Stavely)¹

Employed Residents by Occupation

In Stavelly, sales and service occupations were the largest group in 2021 at 80 people, up 128.6% from 35 in 2016. Trades, transport and equipment operators followed at 75, while business, finance and administration fell to 20.

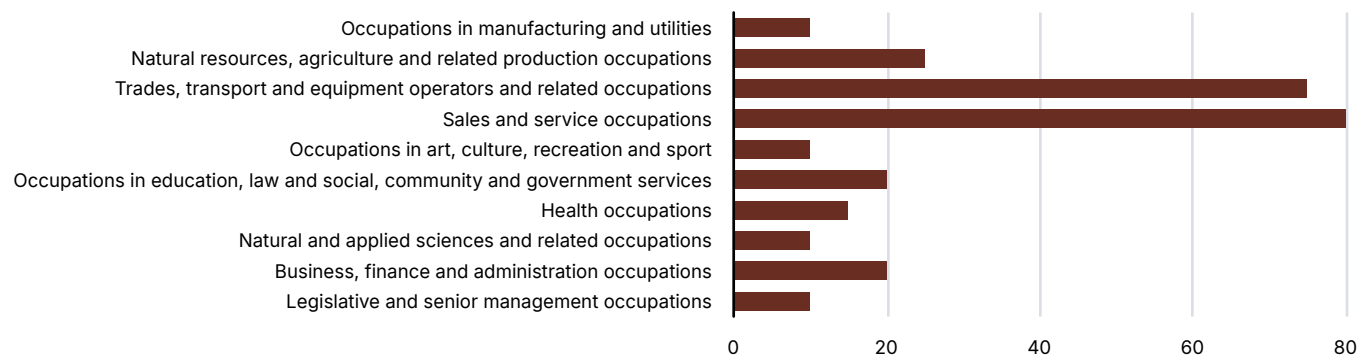


Figure 12.1: Shows the occupations held by employed residents. It helps indicate the community's skill mix and the kinds of work people do. (Stavelly, 2021)¹

In 2021, Stavelly's employed residents were concentrated in sales and service occupations, with 80 people, followed by trades, transport and equipment operators at 75. Natural resources, agriculture and related production accounted for 25, while business, finance and administration and education, law and social, community and government services each had 20. Most other groups were 15 or fewer. The 5-year changes show the strongest growth in sales and service, up 128.6%, and education-related occupations, up 100%.

In Stavelly, employment by occupation in 2021 was concentrated in a few broad groups, with sales and service occupations leading at 80 people and trades, transport and equipment operators at 75. Natural resources, agriculture and related production accounted for 25, while business, finance and administration and education, law and social, community and government services each had 20. Smaller counts appeared in health, management, sciences, art, and manufacturing, suggesting a workforce spread across service, trades, and resource-related work.



Figure 12.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Occupation - Sales and service occupations (Stavelly)¹

Data Sources

1. Statistics Canada, Census Profile. Published in Dec 15, 2022.
2. Statistics Canada, Business Register. Published in Jun 1, 2025.
3. Statistics Canada, Business Register; Localintel, Employment by Industry Estimates of Census Areas. Published in Mar 13, 2026.

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