



CARDSTON COUNTY

Quality of Life Report

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Executive Summary

Cardston County presents a distinctly rural profile shaped by low density, stable household patterns, and a population base that remains more established than rapidly changing. In 2021 the county was still very sparsely populated, even as density continued its gradual rise over the past decade. Its median age sat in the mid-30s, indicating a relatively young population by the standards used in the source text, and the overall picture is of a community whose broad structure has shifted only modestly rather than dramatically.

That stability is most visible in family and housing patterns. Married couples remain the centre of family life, especially couples without children, while common-law families and one-parent families account for much smaller shares. The household mix is still led by family households, but it has become somewhat more varied, with one-person households rising while couple households with children declined. Housing is strongly ownership-based, and ownership became more prominent over the five years as owner households increased and renter households fell. Shelter costs also split clearly by tenure, with owners facing higher monthly costs and a notable increase since 2016, while renter costs were lower and slightly down. Even so, most households were not in core housing need. Income patterns also lean toward the middle and upper-middle ranges, with growth in several higher income bands reinforcing a relatively solid household income profile.

The county's social and cultural makeup is similarly concentrated. Christianity is by far the largest religious affiliation, with little recorded presence in other faith traditions, while English dominates both ethnic origin and mother tongue alongside a notable German presence and other long-established European ancestries. Immigration remains limited in scale, though the immigrant population grew faster than the non-immigrant population and was concentrated among people who arrived at younger and working ages. Education levels point in a broadly credentialed direction, with high school and college attainment forming the largest groups and university credentials also increasing. Cardston County, then, appears as a sparsely settled, ownership-oriented rural community with a stable social base, moderate demographic change, and signs of gradual gains in education and higher household incomes.

Religion

Christian residents were the largest group in Cardston County in 2021, at 2,470 people. No religion and secular perspectives followed with 835 people, while other religions and spiritual traditions counted 20 people.

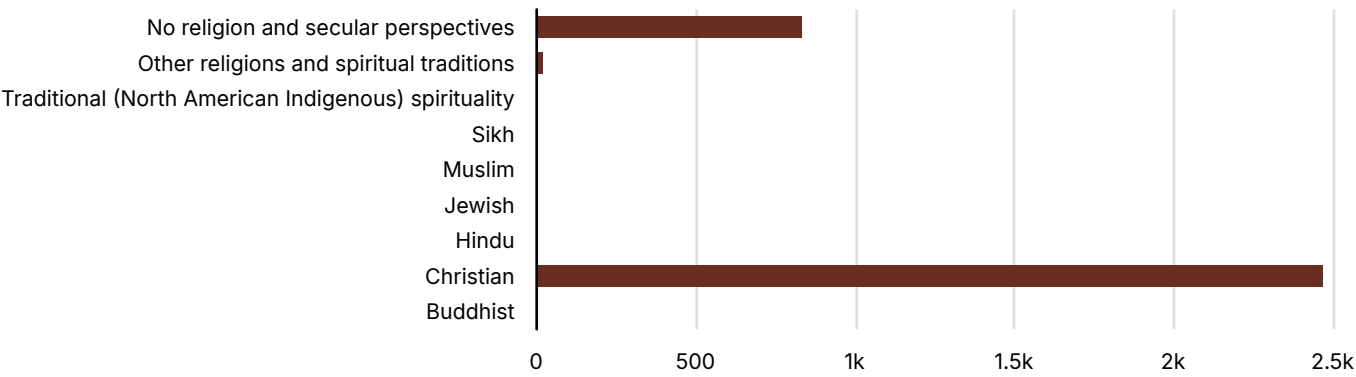


Figure 1.1: Shows residents' religious affiliation. It helps indicate the spiritual and faith-based diversity of the community. (Cardston County, 2021)¹

In 2021, Cardston County's religious profile was highly concentrated. Christian affiliation accounted for 2,470 people, far more than any other category, while 835 residents reported no religion and secular perspectives. Only 20 people were counted in other religions and spiritual traditions, and Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, and Traditional Indigenous spirituality each recorded zero. Within the population in private households, the pattern points to limited religious diversity and a clear dominance of Christian identification.

In 2021, Cardston County's religion profile was dominated by Christianity, with 2,470 people identifying as Christian. A further 835 reported no religion and secular perspectives, while 20 said they followed other religions and spiritual traditions. Reported counts for Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, and traditional Indigenous spirituality were all zero. This pattern suggests a strongly concentrated religious landscape in private households, with little recorded presence outside Christianity and non-religious affiliation.

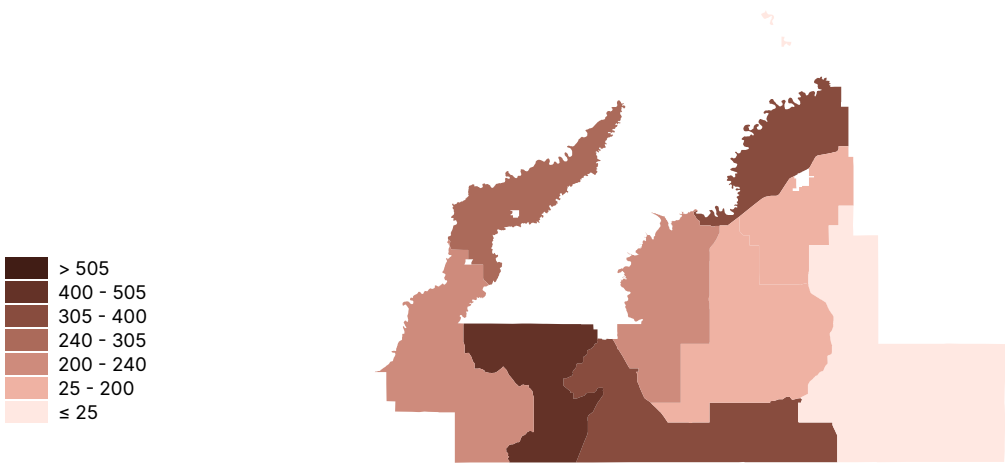


Figure 1.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Religion - Christian (Cardston County)¹

Family Type

In Cardston County, married couples without children were the largest family type in 2021 at 465 people, unchanged from 2016. Married couples with children fell 7.4% to 375, while one-parent families held at 60.

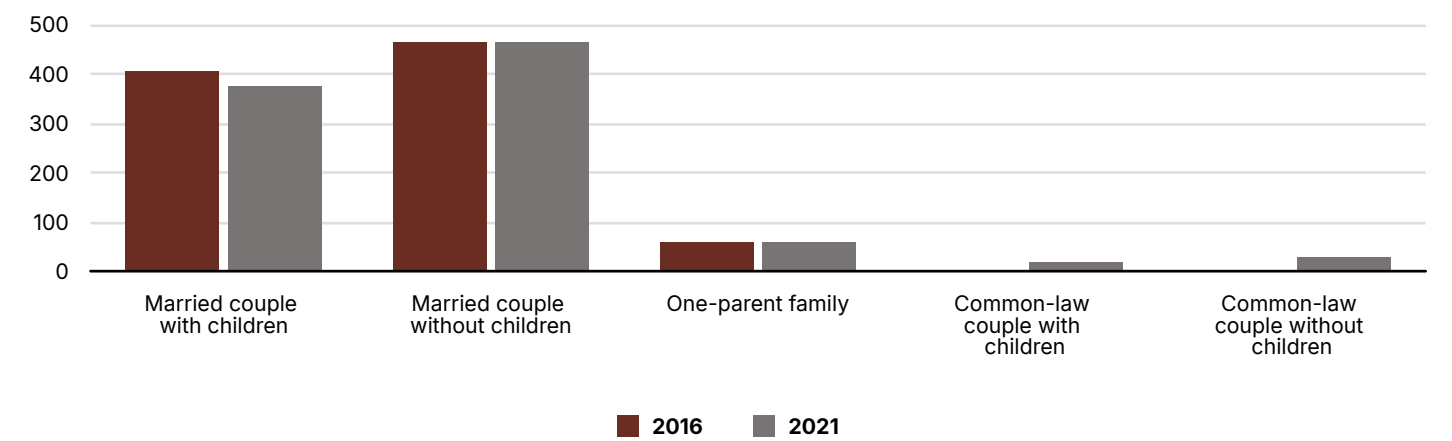
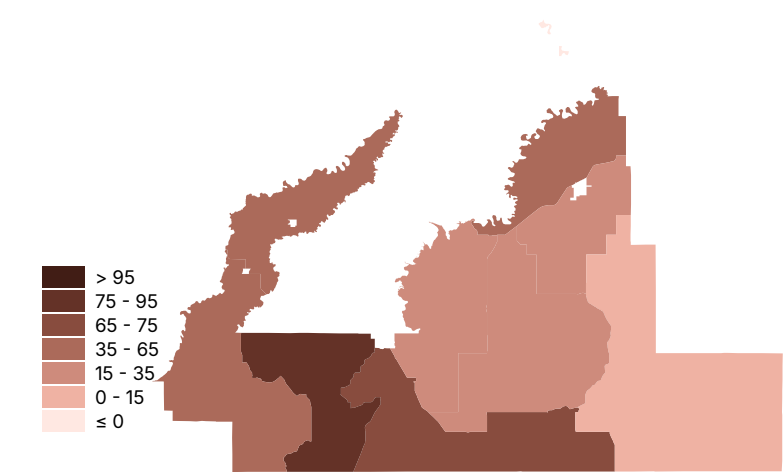


Figure 2.1: Shows the mix of family types, such as couple families and lone-parent families. It helps indicate the structure of family life in the community. (Cardston County, 2016-2021)¹

Cardston County's family structure in 2021 was led by married couple families, with and without children making up the largest counts in the census family population. Married couples without children numbered 465, while married couples with children totaled 375. Smaller family types were far less common. One-parent families accounted for 60 people, common-law couples without children for 30, and common-law couples with children for 20. The five-year change points to relative stability in most groups. Married couples with children fell by 7.4%, while married couples without children and one-parent families were unchanged. The common-law categories had no reported five-year change. This profile suggests a family mix dominated by married couples, with limited movement over time in the available measures.



Cardston County's family structure in 2021 was dominated by married couples, especially those without children. There were 465 married couples without children and 375 with children, while one-parent families numbered 60. Common-law families were much fewer, at 30 without children and 20 with children. The mix suggests a community where couple families form the clear core of census families in private households, with a smaller lone-parent presence and limited common-law representation.

Figure 2.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Family Type - Married couple without children (Cardston County)¹

Ethnic Origin

English is the largest ethnic origin in Cardston County, at 1,535 people in 2021. Scottish follows with 765 and German with 680, while Canadian fell 49.8% to 525 over five years.

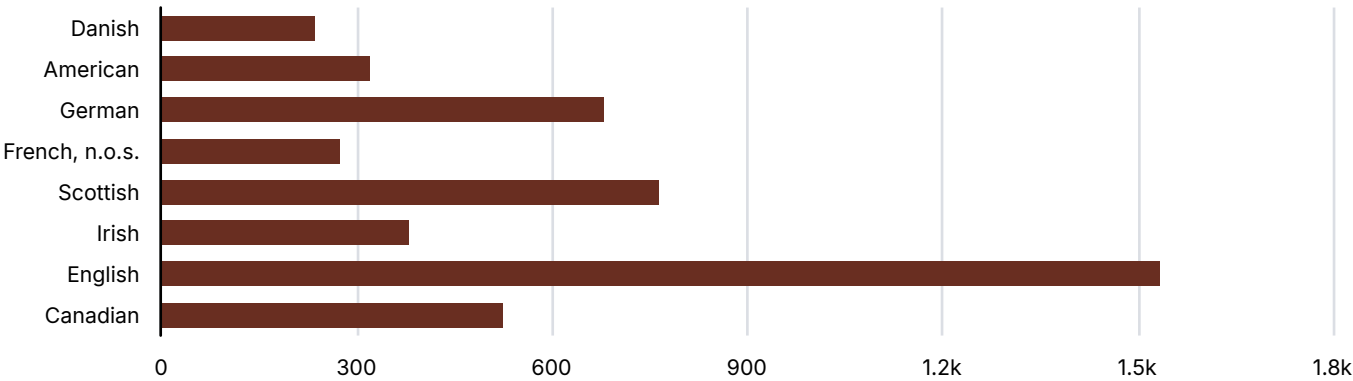


Figure 3.1: Shows the ethnic or cultural origins reported by residents. It helps indicate ancestry patterns and the community's cultural makeup. (Cardston County, 2021)¹

In 2021, Cardston County's reported ethnic origins were led by English at 1,535 people, followed by German at 680, Scottish at 765, and Canadian at 525. Smaller groups included Irish at 380, American at 320, French, n.o.s. at 275, and Danish at 235. The five-year changes were mixed, with Scottish rising 24.4% and American up 16.4%, while Canadian fell 49.8% and Danish declined 34.7%. The pattern suggests a stable but shifting ancestry mix.

Cardston County's reported ethnic origins in 2021 were led by English at 1,535 people, followed by Scottish at 765 and German at 680. Canadian origin was also prominent at 525, while Irish accounted for 380 and American for 320. Danish, at 235, was smaller and showed one of the sharper five-year declines in the table. The pattern suggests a strong concentration in long-established European origins, with recent change varying by origin rather than moving in one direction. English and Irish rose modestly over five years, Scottish increased more quickly, and Canadian and Danish declined.

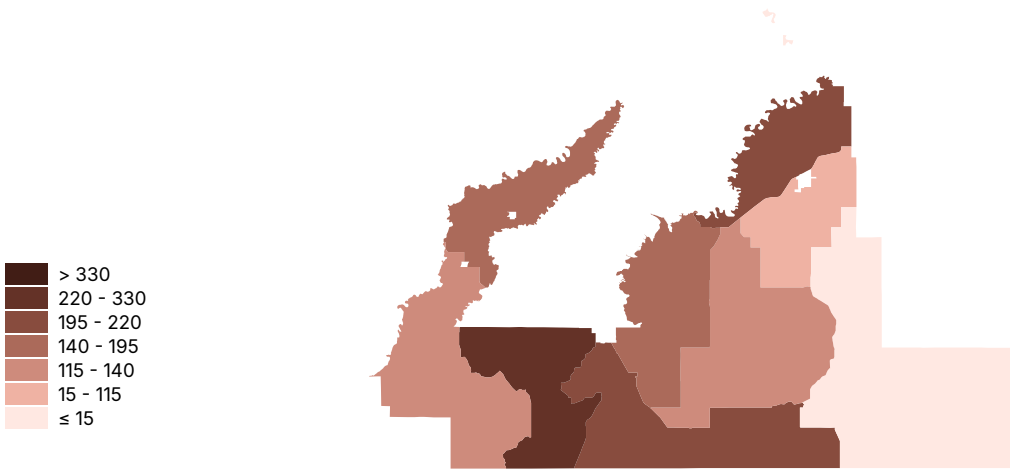


Figure 3.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Ethnic Origin - English (Cardston County)¹

Mother Tongue

English was the largest mother tongue in Cardston County at 3,195 people, up 4.8% over five years. German ranked second at 1,520, while Hungarian declined 50% to 5 people.

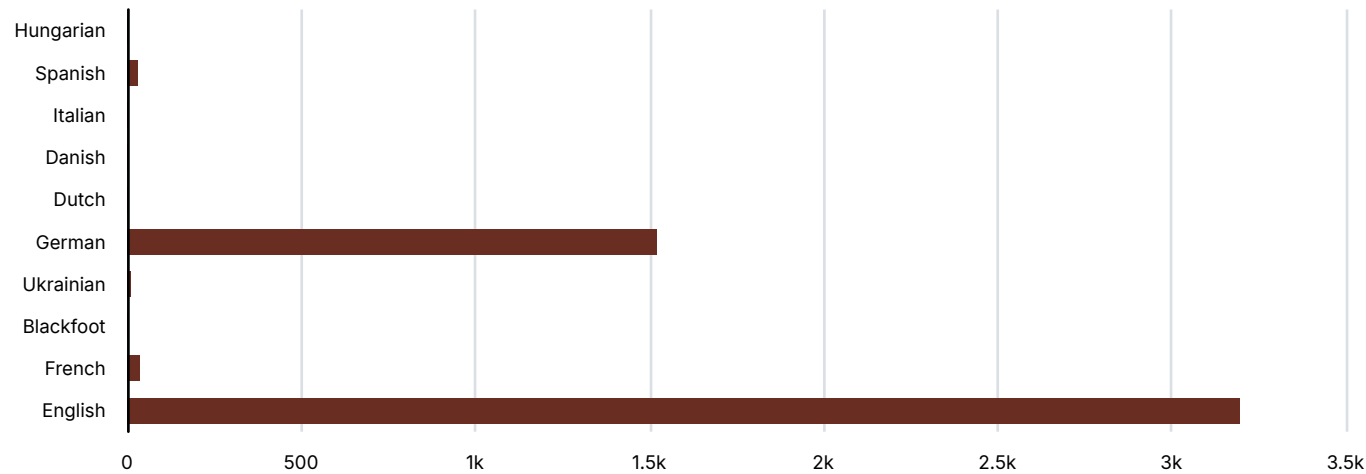
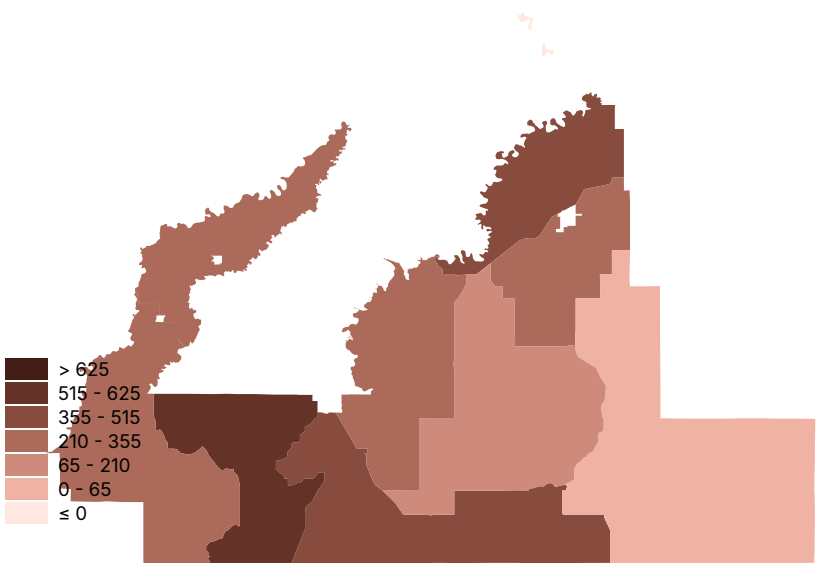


Figure 4.1: Shows the first language learned and still understood by residents. It helps indicate the linguistic roots of the population. (Cardston County, 2021)¹

In 2021, Cardston County’s mother tongue profile was led by English and German, with English reported for 3,195 people and German for 1,520. Those two languages accounted for the clearest time-related gains in the data, rising 4.8% and 16.9% over five years respectively. French remained much smaller at 35 people, but it also increased sharply by 40%. Several smaller languages showed flat or mixed movement, including Spanish at 30 people, while Blackfoot and Hungarian each fell by 50% from very small bases. The pattern suggests a stable but uneven linguistic mix.



Cardston County’s mother tongue profile in 2021 is led by English and German, with English reported for 3,195 people and German for 1,520. French is much smaller at 35, while Spanish stands at 30. The pattern suggests a strong English base alongside a notable German linguistic presence, with other languages appearing only in small numbers.

Figure 4.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Language - English (Cardston County)¹

Population Density

Cardston County's population density reached 1.4 people per square kilometre in 2021, up from 1.3 in 2016 and 1.2 in 2011. The five-year increase was 7.7%, slightly below the previous period.

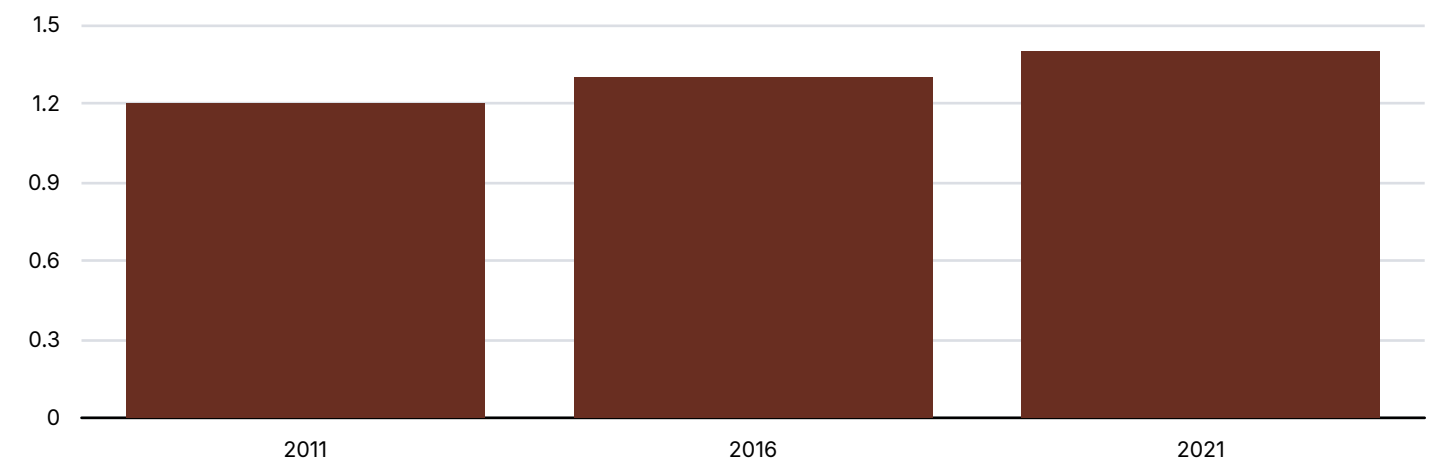
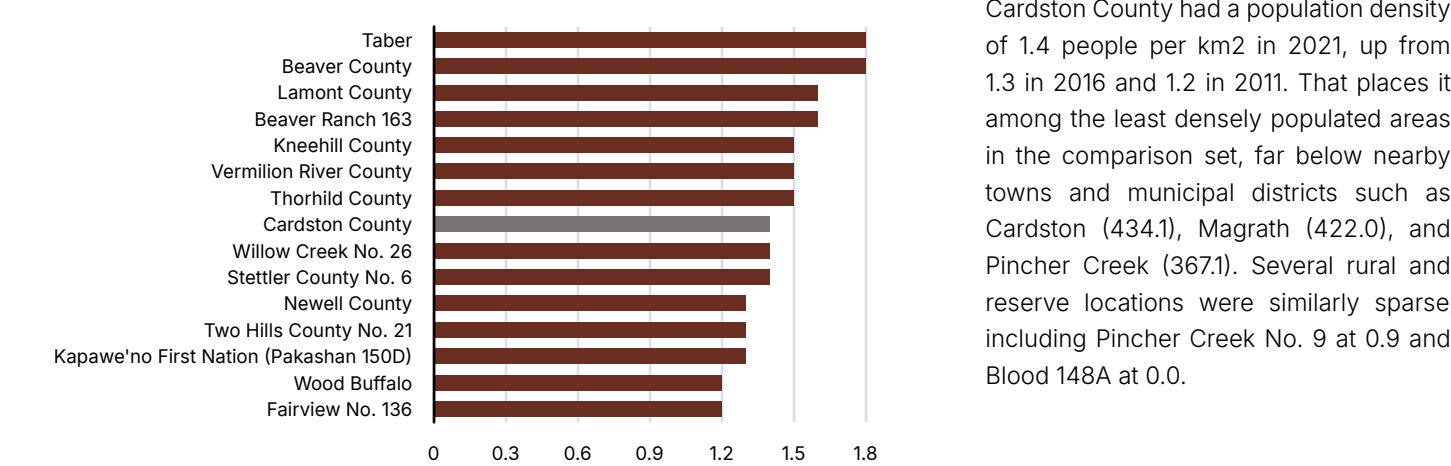


Figure 5.1: Shows how many people live per unit of land area. It helps indicate how compact or spread out the population is. (Cardston County, 2011-2021)¹

Cardston County's population density remained very low over the census years shown, but it edged up gradually. In 2011, there were 1.2 people per square kilometre, rising to 1.3 in 2016 and 1.4 in 2021. The pattern is one of slow, steady increase rather than sharp change. The 5-year change figures reinforce that modest momentum. Density increased by 8.3% from 2011 to 2016 and by 7.7% from 2016 to 2021. Even with those gains, the county stayed sparsely populated, suggesting a settlement pattern spread across a large land area.



Cardston County had a population density of 1.4 people per km2 in 2021, up from 1.3 in 2016 and 1.2 in 2011. That places it among the least densely populated areas in the comparison set, far below nearby towns and municipal districts such as Cardston (434.1), Magrath (422.0), and Pincher Creek (367.1). Several rural and reserve locations were similarly sparse, including Pincher Creek No. 9 at 0.9 and Blood 148A at 0.0.

Figure 5.2: Comparison of Population Density with other locations (Cardston County, 2021)¹

Highest Education Level

In Cardston County, the largest education group was high school graduates at 890 people in 2021, up 64.8% from 2016. College credentials rose to 545, and masters degrees more than doubled to 70.

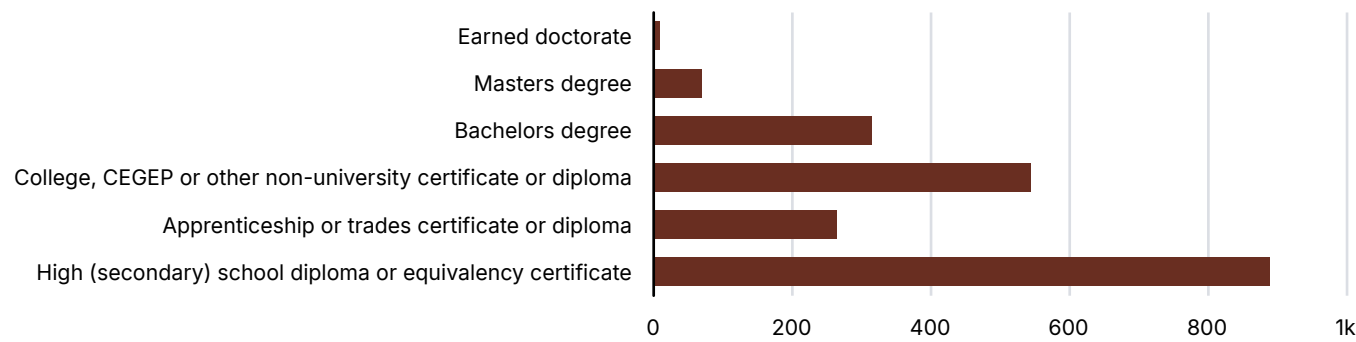


Figure 6.1: Shows the highest level of education completed by residents. It helps indicate the overall educational profile of the population. (Cardston County, 2021)¹

In Cardston County, the 2021 education profile shows a strong base at the secondary and postsecondary certificate level, with 890 people reporting a high school diploma and 545 holding a college or non-university certificate. Over five years, both categories rose sharply, by 64.8% and 58.0% respectively. University credentials also increased, including 315 bachelor’s holders and 70 with a master’s degree, up 21.1% and 133.3%. The pattern points to broad educational growth, especially in mid-level and graduate attainment.

Cardston County’s 2021 education profile is concentrated in secondary and postsecondary non-university credentials, with 890 people whose highest credential is a high school diploma, 545 with college or CEGEP credentials, and 315 with a bachelor’s degree. Apprenticeship or trades credentials account for 265 people, while 70 have a master’s degree and 10 hold an earned doctorate. Recent change is strongest at the master’s level, up 133.3% over five years. Across the county’s local areas, high school and college credentials dominate most clearly, while some smaller areas show little or no recorded attainment in the higher categories.

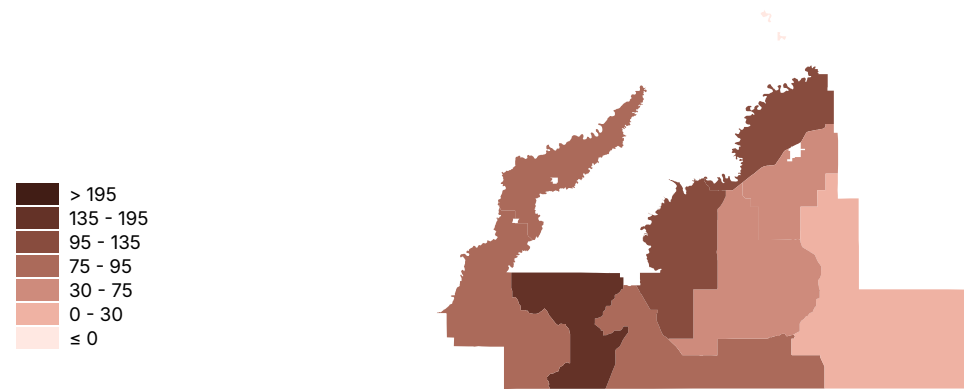


Figure 6.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Education Credential Ca - High (secondary) school diploma or equivalency certificate (Cardston County)¹

Household Type

Couple-family households without children were the largest group in Cardston County in 2021 at 455 households, up 3.4% from 2016. One-person households followed at 210, while two-or-more-person non-census-family households tripled to 15.

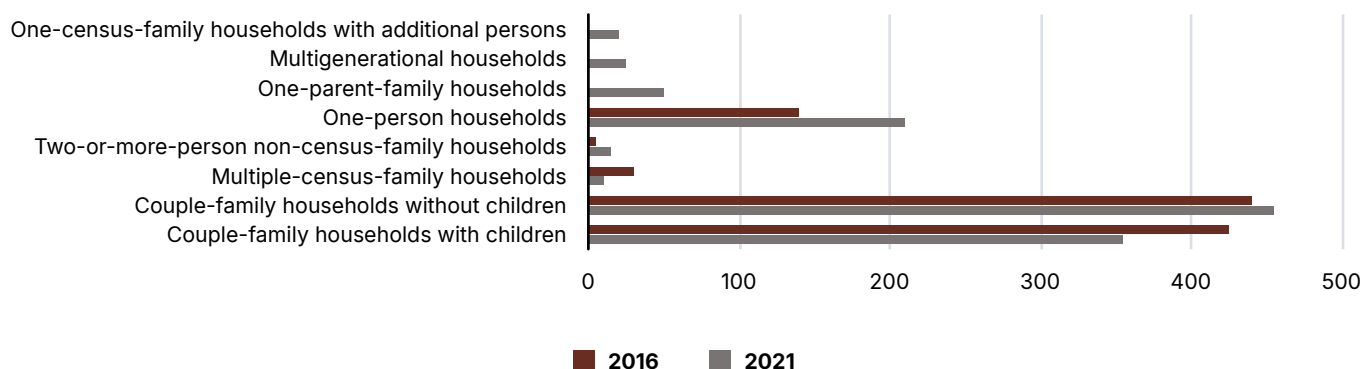


Figure 7.1: Shows the mix of household types, including one-person, family, and non-family households. It helps indicate how residents are organized across living arrangements. (Cardston County, 2016-2021)¹

Cardston County's household mix in 2021 was led by couple-family households without children, while couple-family households with children remained a major share. The county also had a notable number of one-person households, showing a more varied living arrangement pattern than a single family profile. Counts ranged from 455 couple-family households without children to 210 one-person households and 355 couple-family households with children. Over five years, one-person households rose 50%, while couple-family households with children fell 16.5%.

Cardston County's private households in 2021 were led by couple-family households without children, with 455 households, followed by couple-family households with children at 355 and one-person households at 210. Smaller categories included one-parent families at 50 and multigenerational households at 25. The mix still leans toward family households, but the 5-year changes show some movement: couple-family households with children fell 16.5%, while one-person households rose 50%. That points to a more varied household structure, without enough data to explain why.

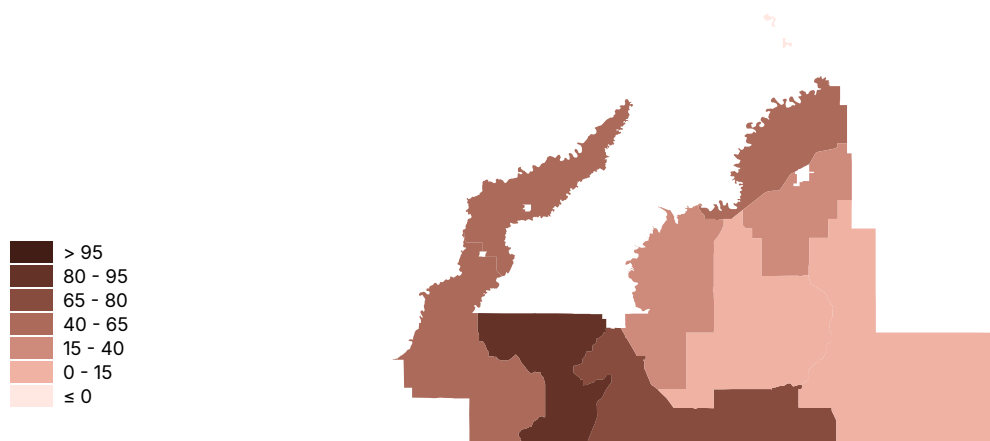


Figure 7.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Household Type - Couple-family households without children (Cardston County)¹

Average Shelter Costs

Cardston County’s owner households had the highest average monthly shelter costs in 2021 at \$1,288, up 24.2% from 2016. Renter costs were lower at \$800 and slipped 1.6% over the same period.

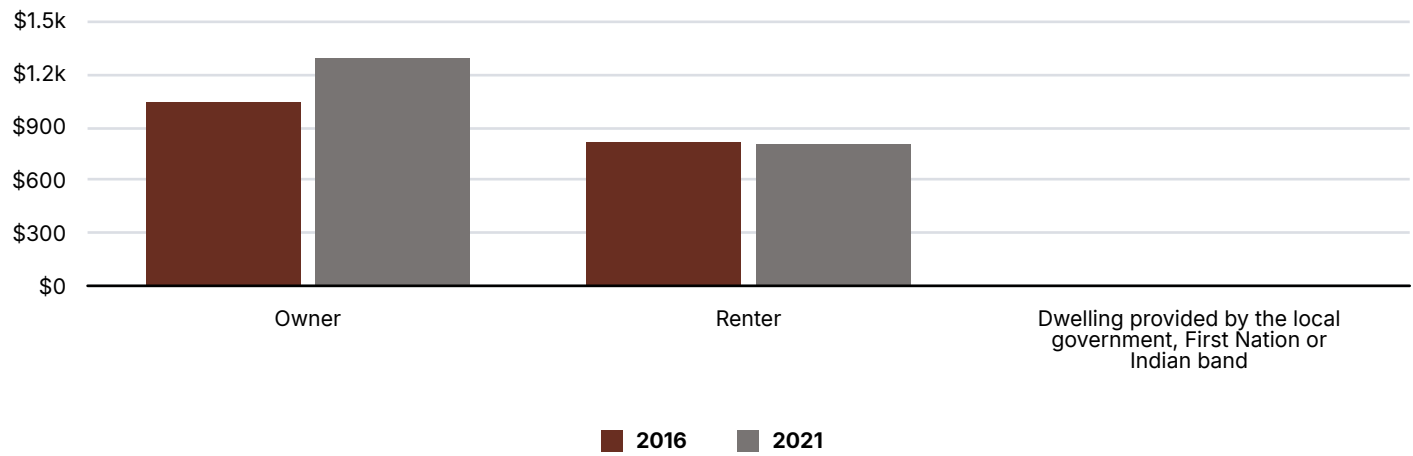
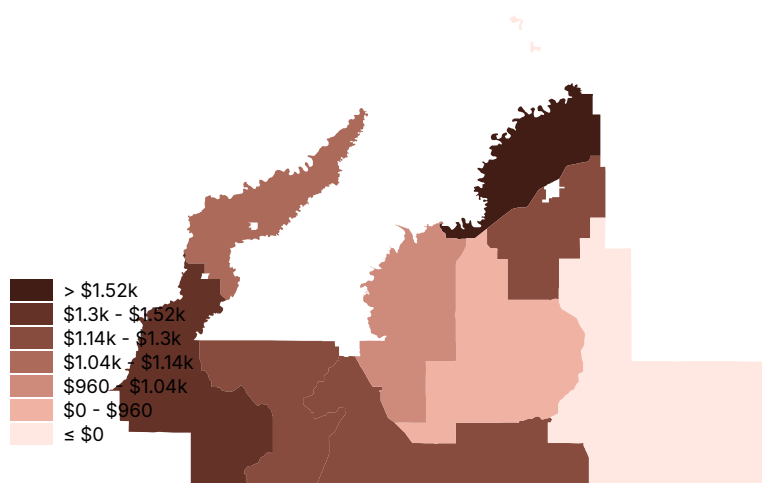


Figure 8.1: Shows the average monthly shelter costs paid by households. It helps indicate typical housing expenses faced by owners and renters. (Cardston County, 2016-2021)¹

In 2021, average monthly shelter costs in Cardston County differed sharply by housing tenure. Owner households faced higher costs than renters, while households in dwellings provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band reported no cost. Owners paid an average of \$1,288 per month, up 24.2% over five years. Renters paid \$800, a decline of 1.6% over the same period. The gap between owners and renters was \$488 a month. That difference shows a clear split in shelter costs across tenure types. The five-year changes suggest rising pressure for owners and a slightly lower cost profile for renters, with the third tenure category remaining at zero in the available data.



In Cardston County, average monthly shelter costs in 2021 were \$1,288 for owner households and \$800 for renters in non-farm, non-reserve private dwellings. Owner costs were higher and had risen 24.2% over five years, while renter costs were slightly lower, down 1.6%. Several local areas showed zero reported costs for one or both tenures, suggesting limited coverage in parts of the county.

Figure 8.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Housing Tenure - Owner (Cardston County)¹

Housing Tenure

Owner households were the largest group in Cardston County in 2021 at 960, up 12.94% from 850 in 2016. Renter households fell to 180 from 195, leaving owner housing dominant.

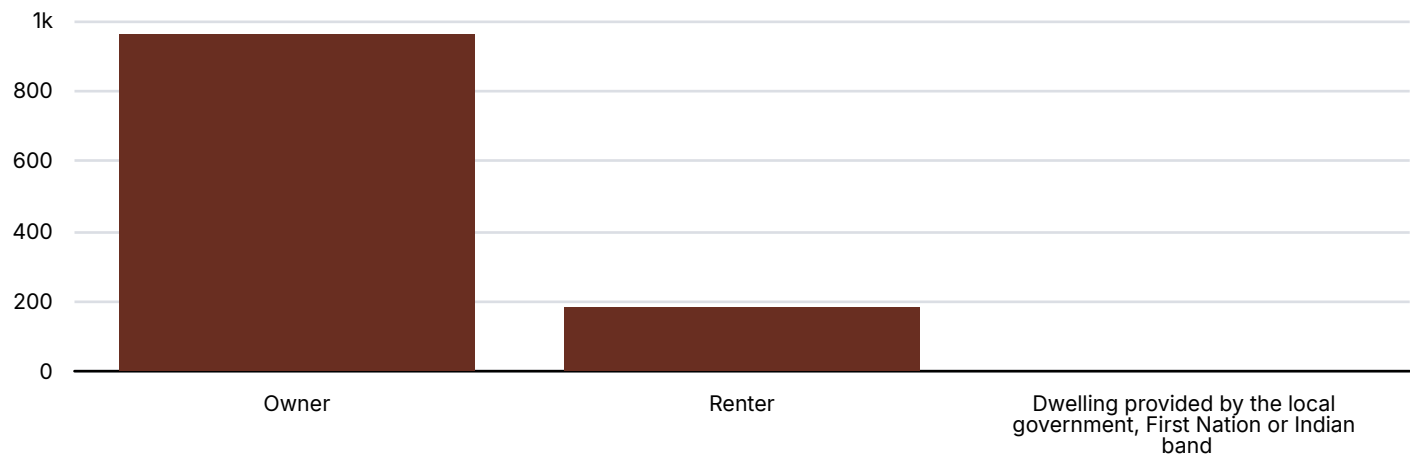
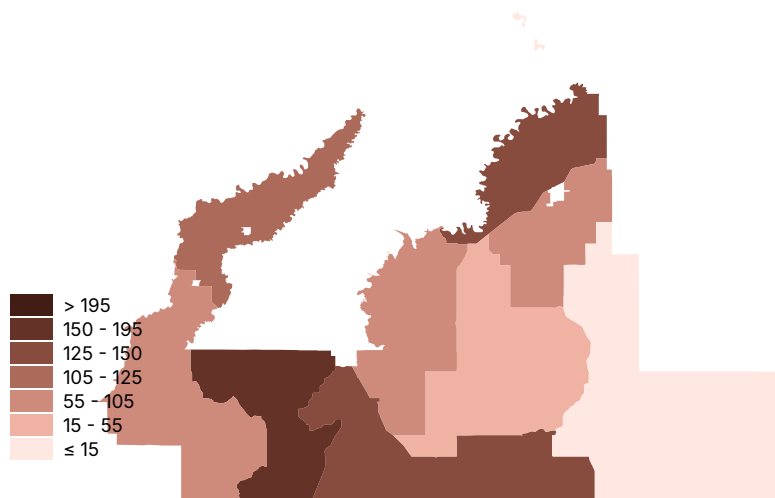


Figure 9.1: Shows whether households own or rent their homes. It helps indicate the balance between ownership and rental housing in the community. (Cardston County, 2021)¹

In Cardston County, housing tenure is heavily weighted toward ownership among private households. In 2021, 960 households were owners, compared with 180 renter households, while no households were reported as living in dwellings provided by the local government, a First Nation or an Indian band. The 5-year change suggests ownership grew by 12.9% over the period, while renter households fell by 7.7%. That points to a tenure mix that became more ownership-oriented rather than more rental-based. With ownership accounting for the clear majority of households, the county’s housing pattern appears stable but not evenly split.



In 2021, housing tenure in Cardston County was heavily owner-based among private households. There were 960 owner households versus 180 renter households, while no dwellings were reported as provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band. The pattern was also visible in local areas, where several dissemination areas had far more owners than renters, and some had no recorded households at all. This points to a tenure mix dominated by ownership, with limited rental presence.

Figure 9.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Housing Tenure - Owner (Cardston County)¹

Household Total Income Groups

Cardston County's largest household income group in 2021 was \$150,000 to \$199,999 at 120 households, up 41.2% since 2016. The \$200,000 and over group rose 63.6% to 90 households.

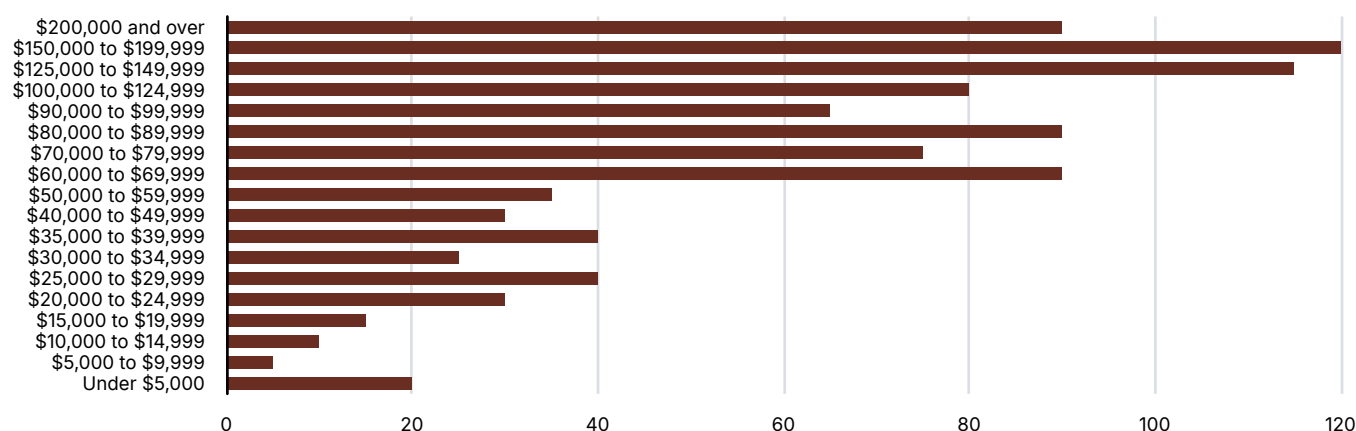


Figure 10.1: Shows households across total income groups. It helps indicate how household incomes are distributed from lower- to higher-income ranges. (Cardston County, 2021)¹

In 2021, Cardston County's household income profile leaned toward middle and upper-middle ranges, with the largest counts clustered between \$60,000 and \$199,999. The biggest groups were \$150,000 to \$199,999 at 120 households, \$125,000 to \$149,999 at 115, and both \$60,000 to \$69,999 and \$80,000 to \$89,999 at 90 each. The lower-income bands were smaller, including 20 households under \$5,000 and 5 in the \$5,000 to \$9,999 range. Over five years, several higher-income brackets grew, including \$200,000 and over, up 63.6%, and \$100,000 to \$124,999, up 45.5%. That pattern suggests a distribution with more weight in the middle and upper ranges, alongside recent gains in several higher-income categories.

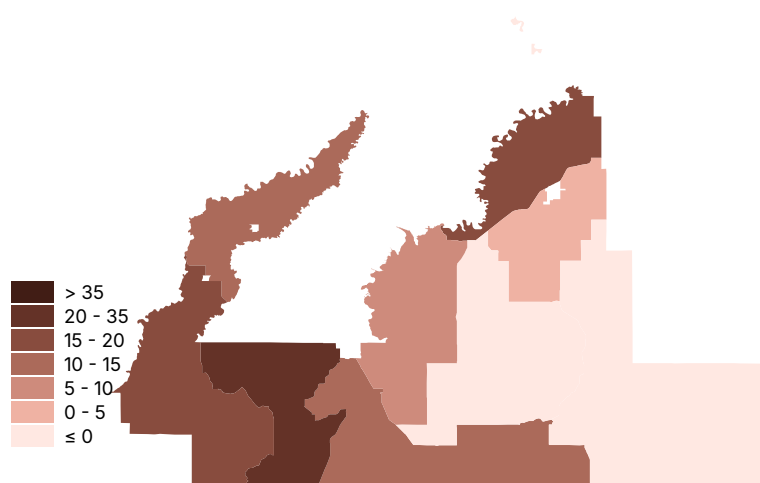


Figure 10.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Income Group Household - \$150,000 to \$199,999 (Cardston County)¹

Cardston County's household income profile in 2021 is spread across many bands, with a clear middle and upper-middle presence. The largest groups are \$150,000 to \$199,999 at 120 households, \$125,000 to \$149,999 at 115, and both \$60,000 to \$69,999 and \$80,000 to \$89,999 at 90. That pattern is reinforced by growth in higher brackets, including 63.6% in \$200,000 and over. Lower-income bands are smaller, so the distribution leans toward higher earnings.

High School Completion

Cardston County’s largest education group in 2021 was residents with a high school diploma or equivalent, numbering 2,150 people. Those without any certificate, diploma or degree totalled 350, a much smaller group.

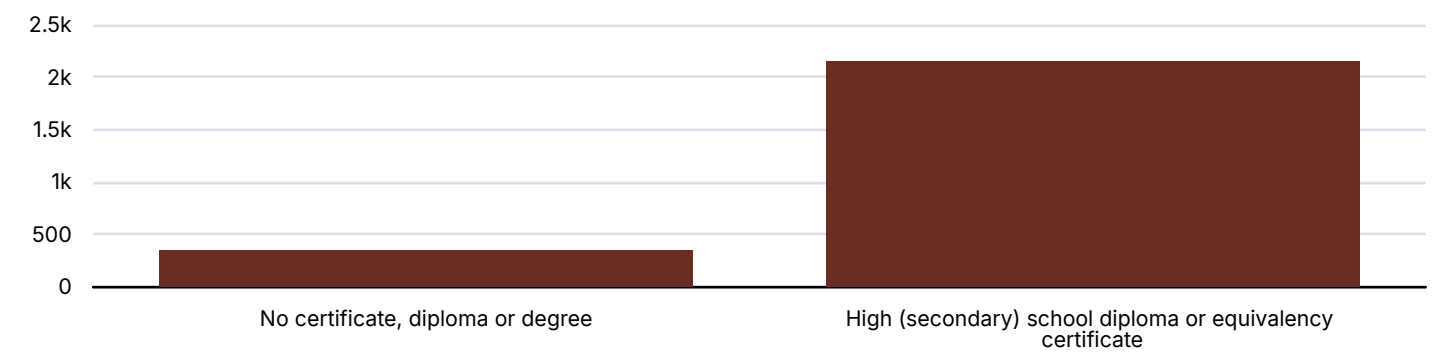


Figure 11.1: Shows whether residents have completed high school or an equivalent credential. It helps indicate a basic foundation for workforce participation and further study. (Cardston County, 2021)¹

In 2021, high school completion in Cardston County was concentrated among adults aged 15 and over in private households. A total of 2,150 people had a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, compared with 350 who had no certificate, diploma or degree. That means the completed-high-school group was much larger than the group without any credential. With only one year shown, the data offer a snapshot rather than a trend, but they still point to a relatively credentialed adult population.

In 2021, Cardston County’s high school completion profile was strongly tilted toward credential attainment. Among residents aged 15 and over in private households, 2,150 people had a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, while 350 had no certificate, diploma or degree. That means 86.0% had completed high school or its equivalent, compared with 14.0% without any credential. Within the county, several dissemination areas were concentrated in the same direction, including counts of 415, 330, 310, and 260 diploma holders. The pattern suggests a relatively credentialed population in this basic education measure, with smaller pockets where completion counts are lower.

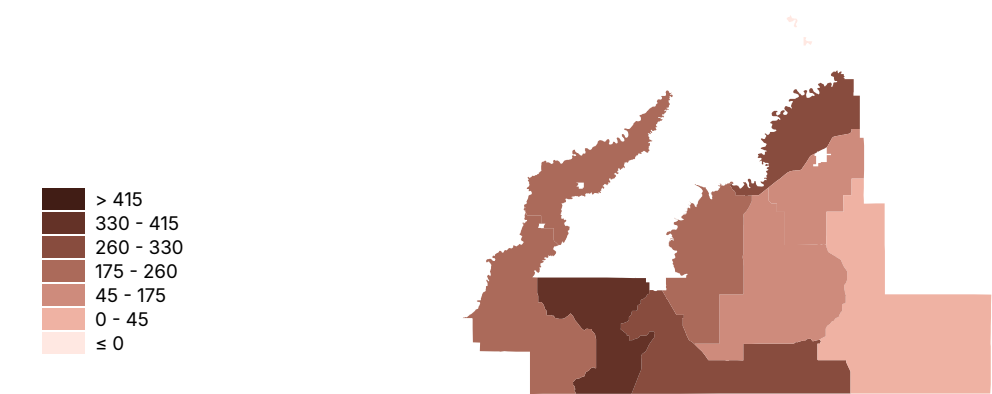


Figure 11.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Education Credential Ca - High (secondary) school diploma or equivalency certificate (Cardston County)¹

Core Housing Need

Cardston County had 780 households not in core housing need in 2021, compared with 50 in core need. Households outside core need outnumbered those in core need by 15.6 to 1.

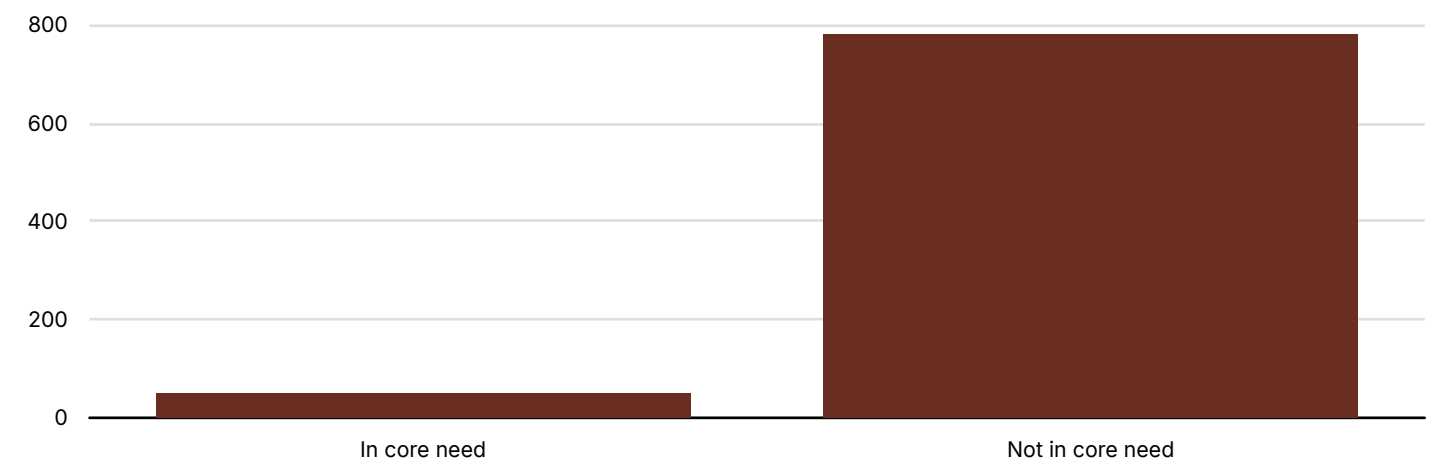
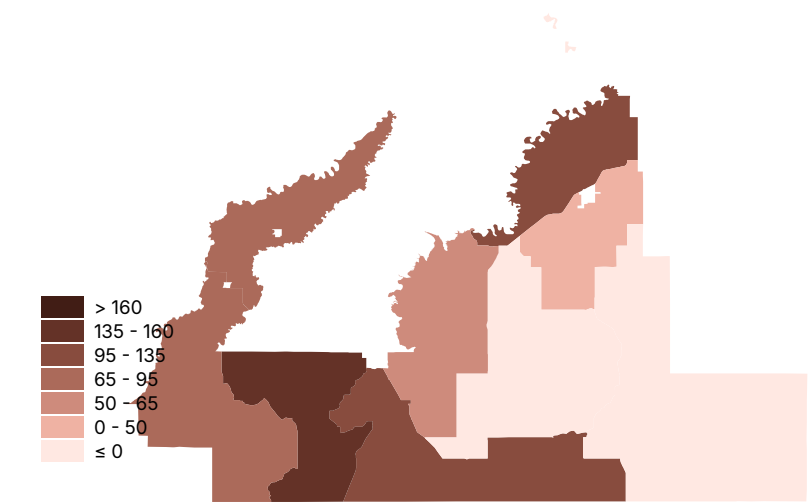


Figure 12.1: Shows the share of households living in housing that is unaffordable, unsuitable, or in need of major repairs. It helps indicate overall housing stress in the community. (Cardston County, 2021)¹

In 2021, Cardston County had 50 households in core housing need and 780 not in core need, within the population of owner and tenant households covered by the census measure. The data points to a relatively small number of households facing housing stress compared with the much larger group that was not in core need. No earlier or later year is provided, so time trends cannot be assessed from this dataset. With only a single census snapshot, the clearest reading is structural rather than directional: core housing need is present, but it is concentrated among a minority of households in the county.



In 2021, Cardston County had 50 households in core housing need and 780 not in core need, within the census-defined household universe. That places most households outside core need, with the issue affecting a smaller share of the county's housing stock. The pattern is clearer in the local count than in any external benchmark.

Figure 12.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Core Housing Need - Not in core need (Cardston County)¹

Median Age

Cardston County's median age was 36.4 years in 2021, up 3.4% from 2016. It remains below 2011's 37.4 years, showing a decline before a partial rebound.

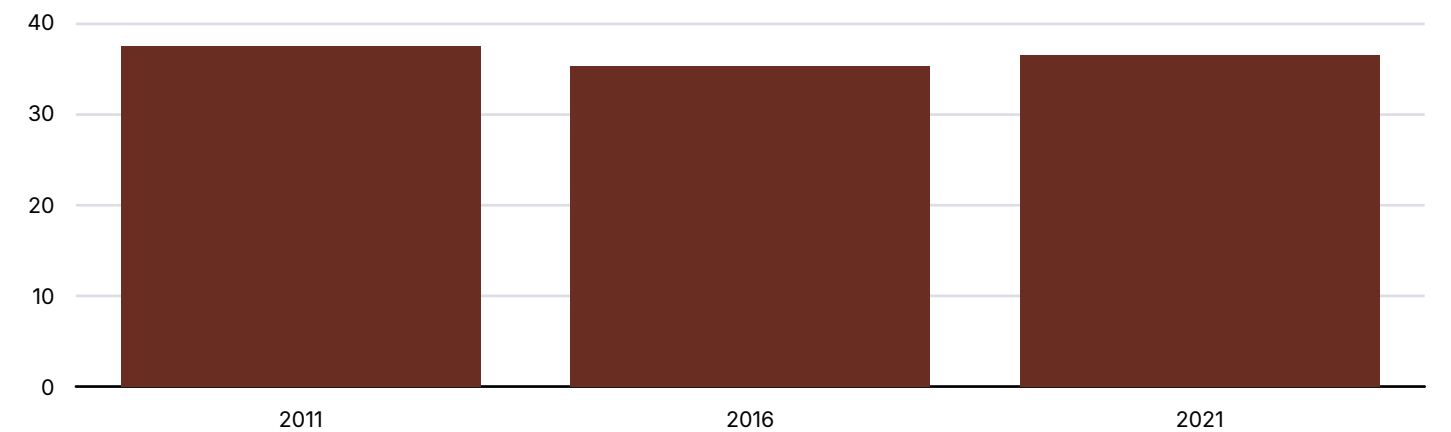


Figure 13.1: Shows the median age of residents. It helps indicate whether the population skews younger or older at the midpoint of the age distribution. (Cardston County, 2011-2021)¹

Cardston County's median age has shifted modestly over time, moving from 37.4 years in 2011 to 35.2 in 2016, then edging back to 36.4 in 2021. The five-year change was -5.9% in 2016 and 3.4% in 2021, showing a recent rebound after an earlier decline. Even with that recovery, the median age in 2021 remained below the 2011 level, suggesting a population midpoint that has stayed relatively stable within a narrow range.

Cardston County's median age was 36.4 years in 2021, a slight rise from 35.2 in 2016 after sitting at 37.4 in 2011. That places it among the younger places in this comparison set, well below nearby communities such as Claresholm at 56.8, Hill Spring and Stavely at 54.8, and Nanton at 52.8. It is closer to Cardston at 40.8 and Fort Macleod at 42.4. The pattern suggests a relatively younger population, with some recent recovery after a mid-decade dip.

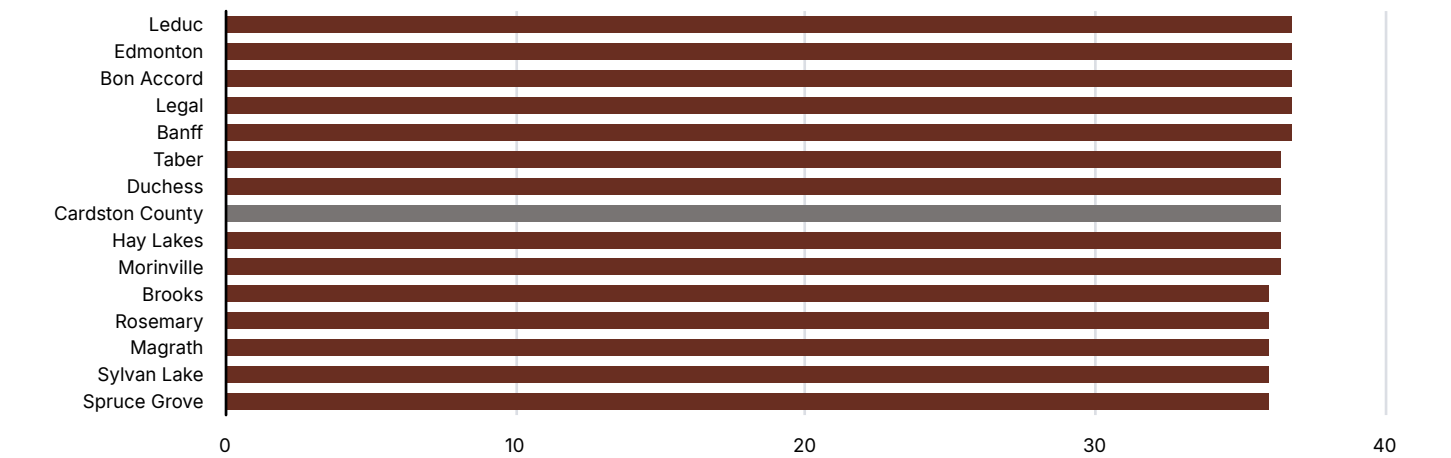


Figure 13.2: Comparison of Median Age with other locations (Cardston County, 2021)¹

Age at Immigration

In Cardston County, immigrants arrived mainly at ages 15 to 24, with 90 people in 2021. The 25 to 44 group rose to 75, up 66.7% from 45 in 2016.

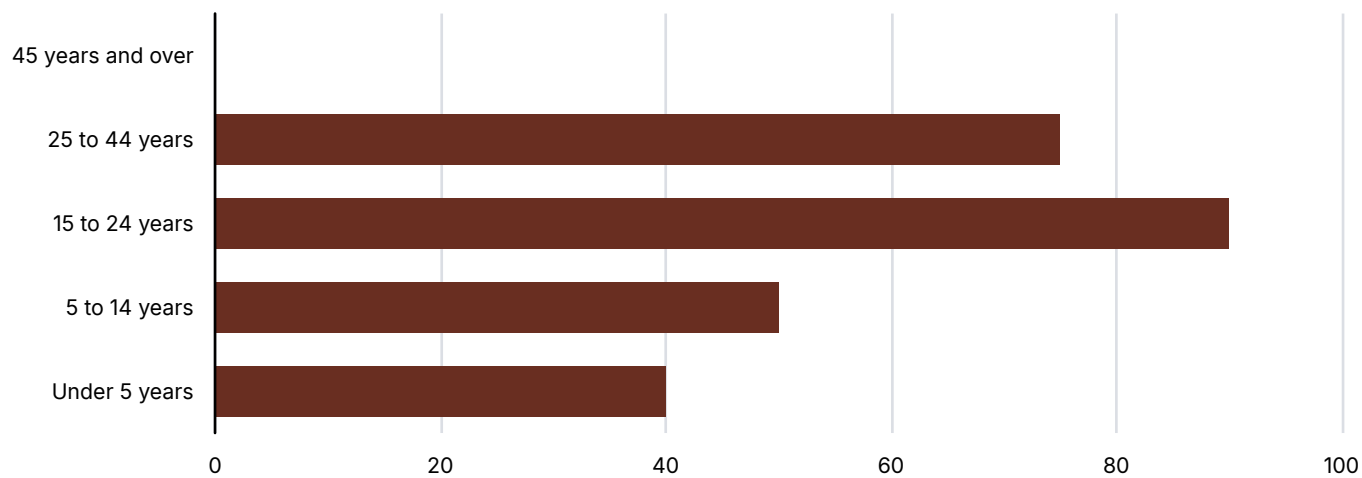
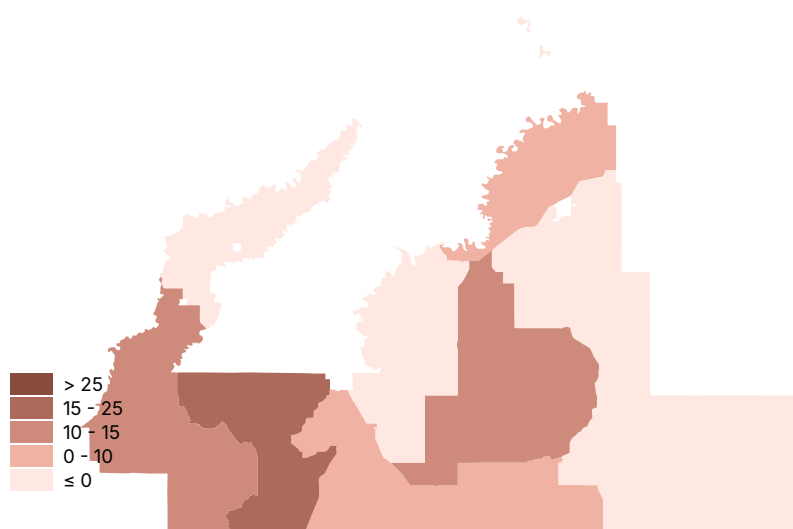


Figure 14.1: Shows the age at which immigrants first arrived in the country. It helps explain whether newcomers arrived mainly as children, working-age adults, or older adults. (Cardston County, 2021)¹

In 2021, Cardston County’s immigrant population in private households was concentrated in working-age arrival groups rather than older ages. The largest cohort arrived at ages 15 to 24, with 90 people, followed by 25 to 44 years with 75. Smaller numbers arrived as children, including 50 at ages 5 to 14 and 40 under age 5. No immigrants were recorded as arriving at 45 years and over. Over five years, the 25 to 44 group rose the fastest, up 66.7%, while arrivals at 15 to 24 years were unchanged. Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile.



In Cardston County, the immigrant population in private households was concentrated among those who arrived as adults. In 2021, 90 people first immigrated at ages 15 to 24, 75 at 25 to 44, 50 at 5 to 14, and 40 under age 5, while none arrived at 45 or older. The mix suggests working-age arrivals were most common, with some child migration as well.

Figure 14.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Age At Immigration - 15 to 24 years (Cardston County)¹

Immigrant Status

Non-immigrants remained the largest group in Cardston County in 2021 at 3,065 people, up 5.2% from 2016. Immigrants rose to 255, while non-permanent residents fell to zero.

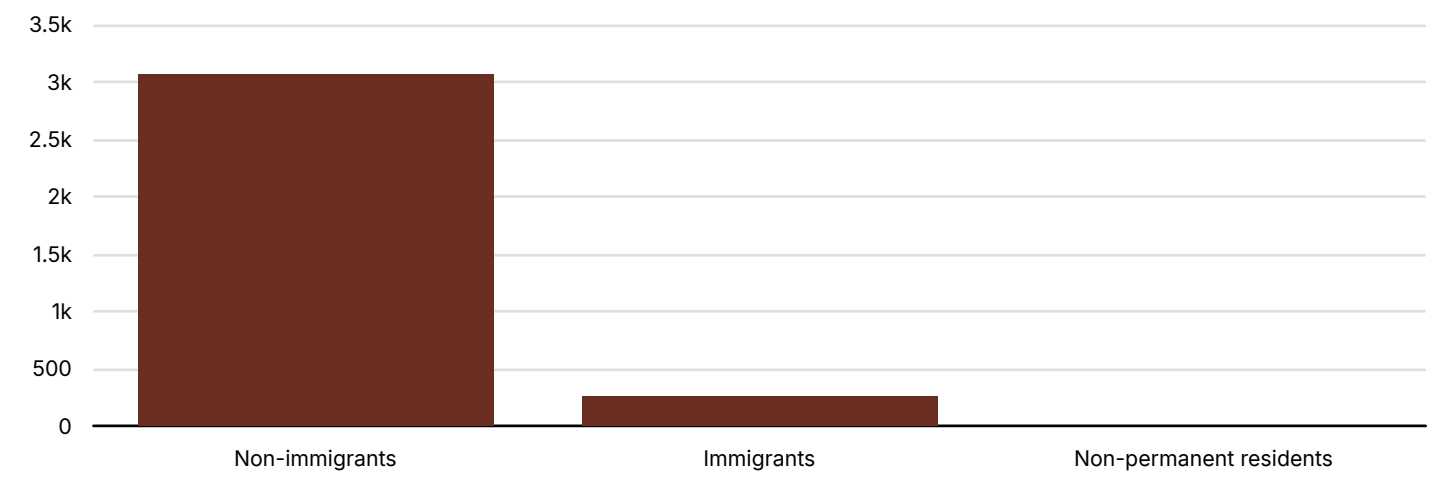


Figure 15.1: Shows whether residents are immigrants, non-permanent residents, or non-immigrants. It helps indicate the role of immigration in community growth and composition. (Cardston County, 2021)¹

In Cardston County, the 2021 immigrant-status profile shows a population that is largely non-immigrant, with immigrants forming a smaller but growing share of residents in private households. Non-immigrants numbered 3,065 people, up 5.2% over five years. Immigrants totaled 255 people, a larger increase of 18.6%. Non-permanent residents were recorded at 0, down 100% from five years earlier. The pattern points to growth in both resident groups, but with faster momentum among immigrants. That leaves the county’s population composition still dominated by non-immigrants in 2021. The data suggest immigration is present but limited in scale, while recent change has been stronger among immigrants than among the larger non-immigrant group.

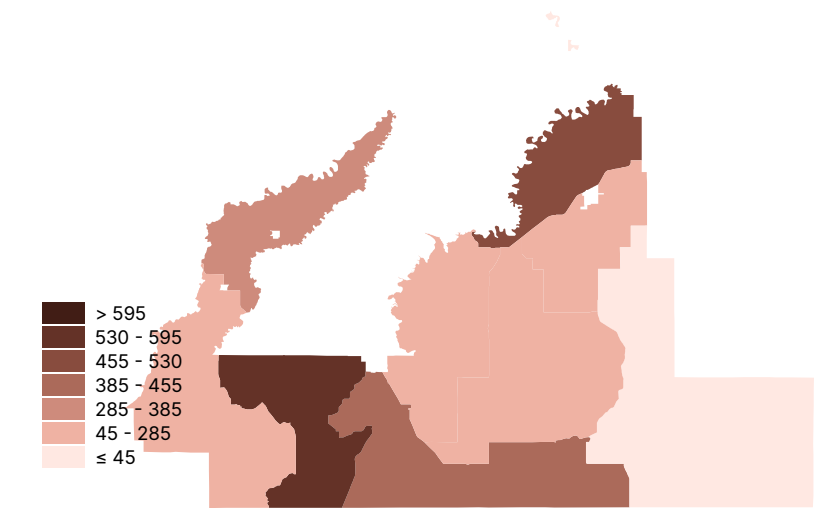


Figure 15.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Immigrant Status - Non-immigrants (Cardston County)¹

Cardston County’s 2021 immigrant status profile shows a population dominated by non-immigrants, with immigration playing a smaller but visible role in the community’s makeup. There were 3,065 non-immigrants and 255 immigrants in private households, while non-permanent residents were recorded at 0. The immigrant count was up 18.6% over five years, and non-immigrants rose 5.2%. That pattern suggests modest immigrant growth alongside a much larger base of long-term residents. The absence of non-permanent residents keeps the profile simple, with change concentrated in the immigrant category.

Data Sources

1. Statistics Canada, Census Profile. Published in Dec 15, 2022.

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