

ALBERTA
SOUTHWEST

FORT MACLEOD

Workforce Report

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Executive Summary

Fort Macleod presents a labour market with a stable core but softer overall engagement. In 2021, employment remained the largest labour force category, yet the margin over those outside the labour force was narrow, and both the participation rate and employment rate were lower than in 2016. Work activity showed the same mixed picture: the number of residents who did not work grew strongly, full-year full-time work increased modestly, and part-year or part-time work declined. The result is a town where employment still anchors the local economy, but where labour market attachment appears less broad than it was five years earlier.

That softening did not translate into a highly temporary or fragmented job base. Most workers were in permanent positions, and most employed residents still worked at a usual workplace. At the same time, work patterns became somewhat more flexible, with noticeable growth in both home-based work and jobs with no fixed workplace. The occupational mix was led by trades, transport and equipment operators, followed by sales and service, giving the workforce a practical and service-oriented profile rather than one centered on management or advanced professional fields. By industry, the resident labour force was concentrated in construction, health care and social assistance, and retail trade, with mixed movement across sectors rather than a single clear direction. A more recent employment snapshot also shows local jobs concentrated in a small number of industries, led by educational services and supported by manufacturing, health care, and retail.

Education adds an important part of the town's overall picture. High school completion was more common than having no formal credential, and the largest highest-credential groups were high school, college, and trades rather than university graduate degrees. That points to a broad middle of educational attainment that aligns with the town's employment structure. Fort Macleod emerges as a community with a workforce rooted in regular workplaces, permanent jobs, and practical occupations, but also one where participation has eased, non-work has become more prominent, and recent change has been uneven rather than uniformly positive or negative.

Place of Work Status

Fort Macleod’s employed labour force was still concentrated in a usual workplace in 2021, with 970 people, down 3.96% from 2016. No fixed workplace reached 235, while worked at home rose to 125, up 56.25%.

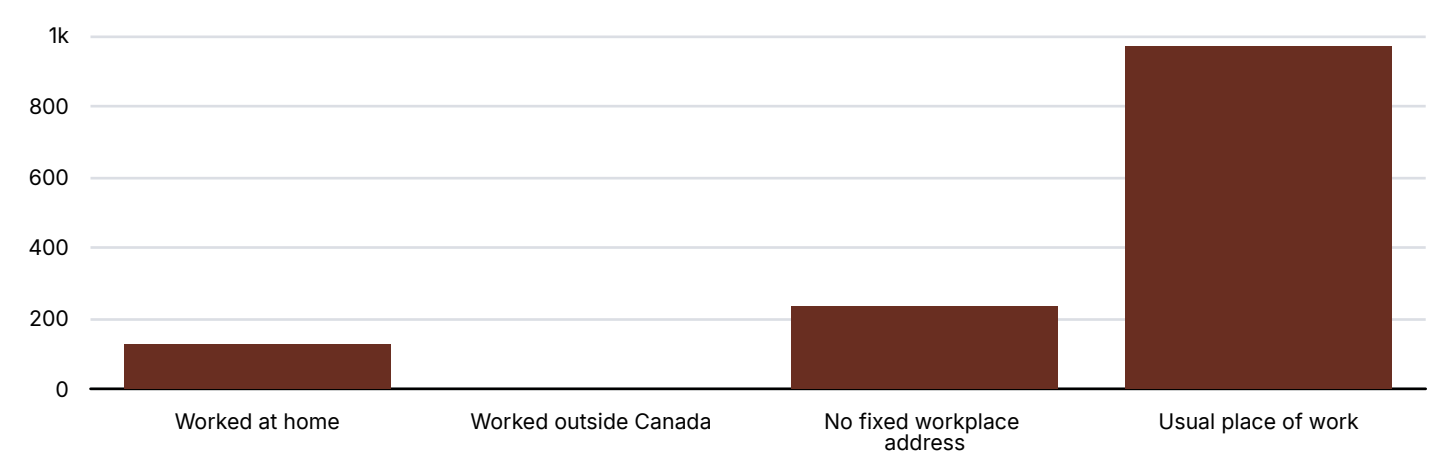


Figure 1.1: Shows whether people work from home, at a usual workplace, or at no fixed workplace. It helps indicate how work is organized across locations. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In 2021, Fort Macleod’s employed labour force aged 15 and over was concentrated in the usual workplace category, but work patterns also included a notable share with no fixed workplace and a smaller home-based segment. 970 people reported a usual place of work, compared with 235 with no fixed workplace address and 125 who worked at home. No one was recorded as working outside Canada. The 5-year change was strongest for home-based work, up 56.3%, while no fixed workplace rose 27.0%. Usual place of work declined 4.0%. These shifts suggest a modest rebalancing of work locations alongside a still-dominant traditional workplace pattern.

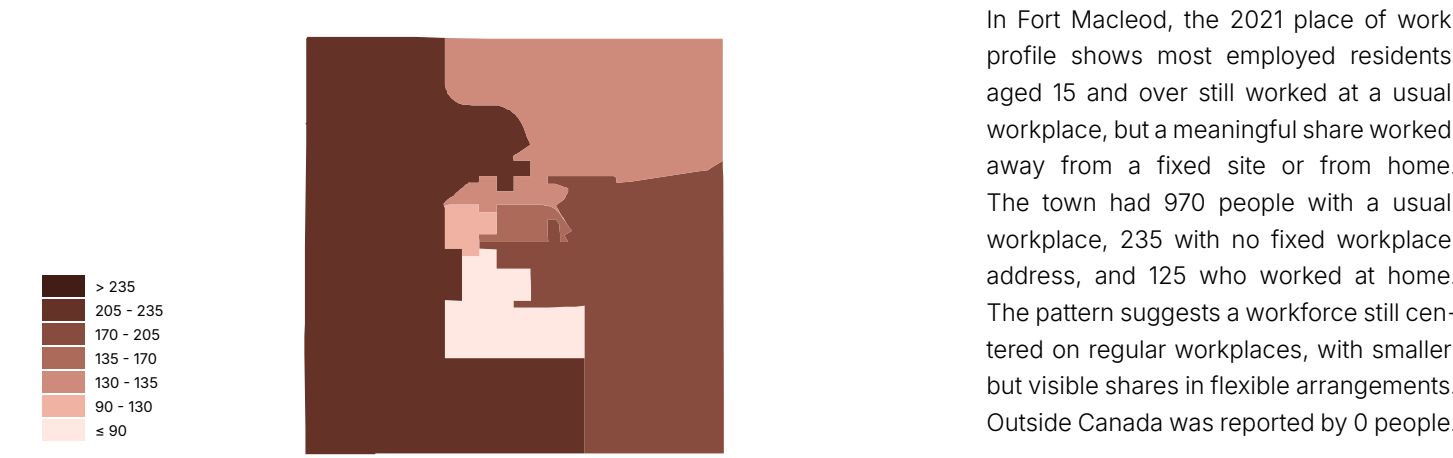


Figure 1.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Place Of Work Status - Usual place of work (Fort Macleod)¹

High School Completion

In Fort Macleod, the largest education group in 2021 had a high school diploma or equivalent, with 1,855 people. Another 740 people had no certificate, diploma or degree, leaving diploma holders as the larger group.

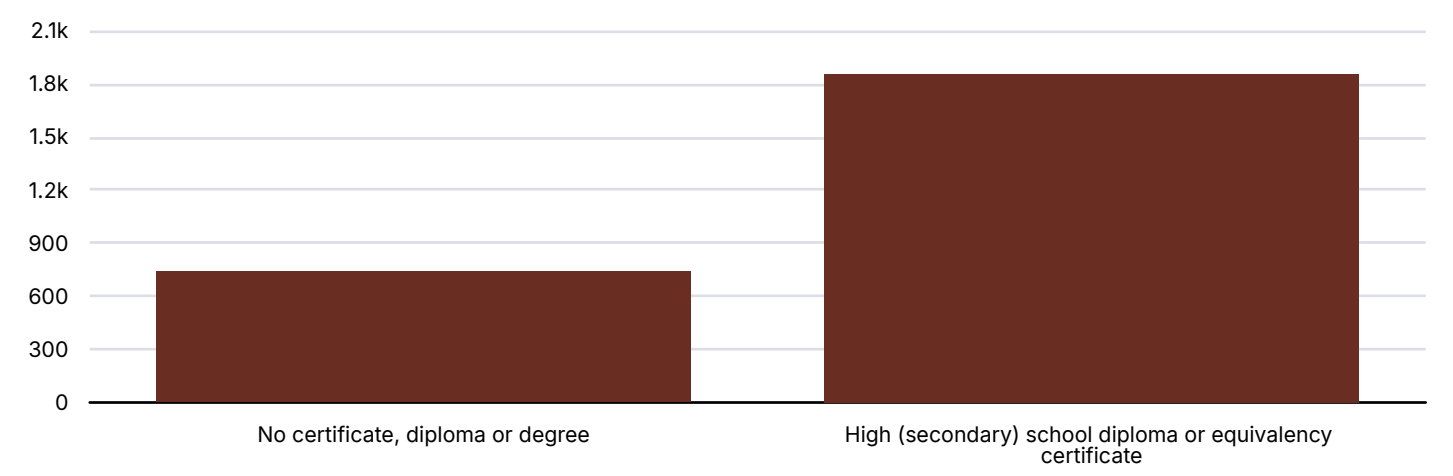


Figure 2.1: Shows whether residents have completed high school or an equivalent credential. It helps indicate a basic foundation for workforce participation and further study. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In 2021, Fort Macleod’s high school completion profile among residents aged 15 and over in private households showed more people with a completed secondary credential than without one. The town had 1,855 residents with a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, compared with 740 who had no certificate, diploma or degree. That split suggests completed secondary education was the larger outcome in the local population, but a substantial group still remained without a formal credential. With only these two counts available, the data support a simple snapshot rather than a deeper trend comparison.

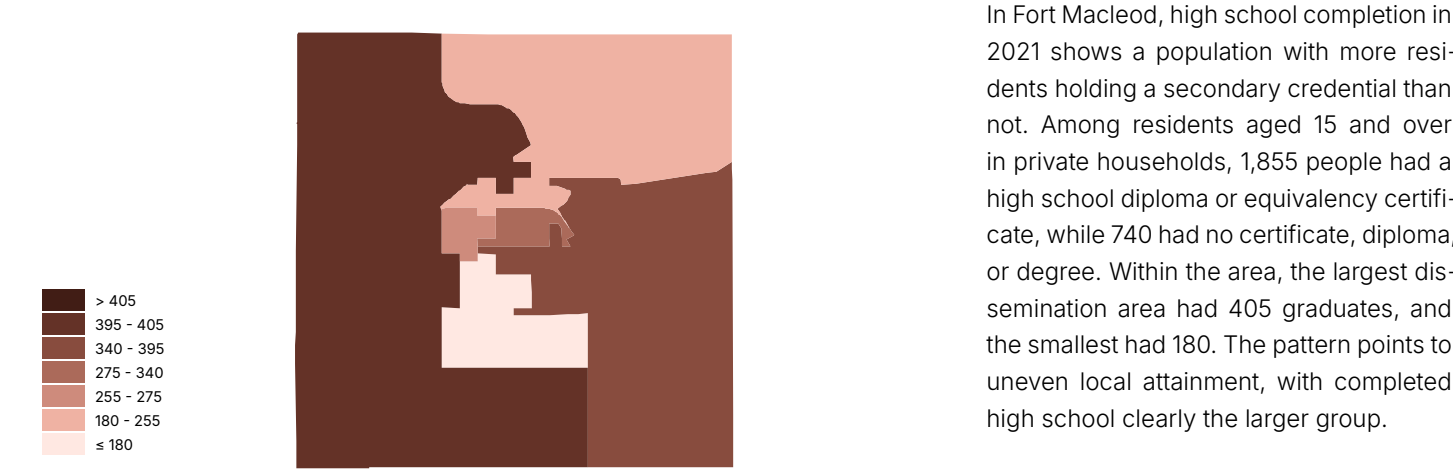


Figure 2.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Education Credential Ca - High (secondary) school diploma or equivalency certificate (Fort Macleod)¹

Labour Force Participation Rate

Fort Macleod’s labour force participation rate was 55.2% in 2021, down from 58.0% in 2016. The five-year change was -4.8%, showing lower labour market engagement over the period.

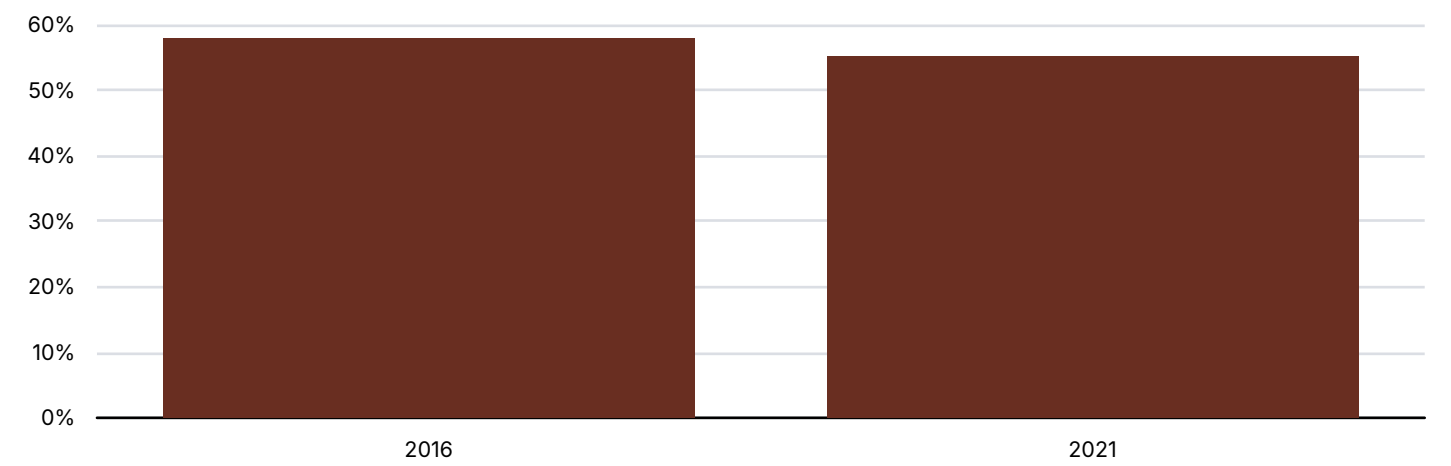
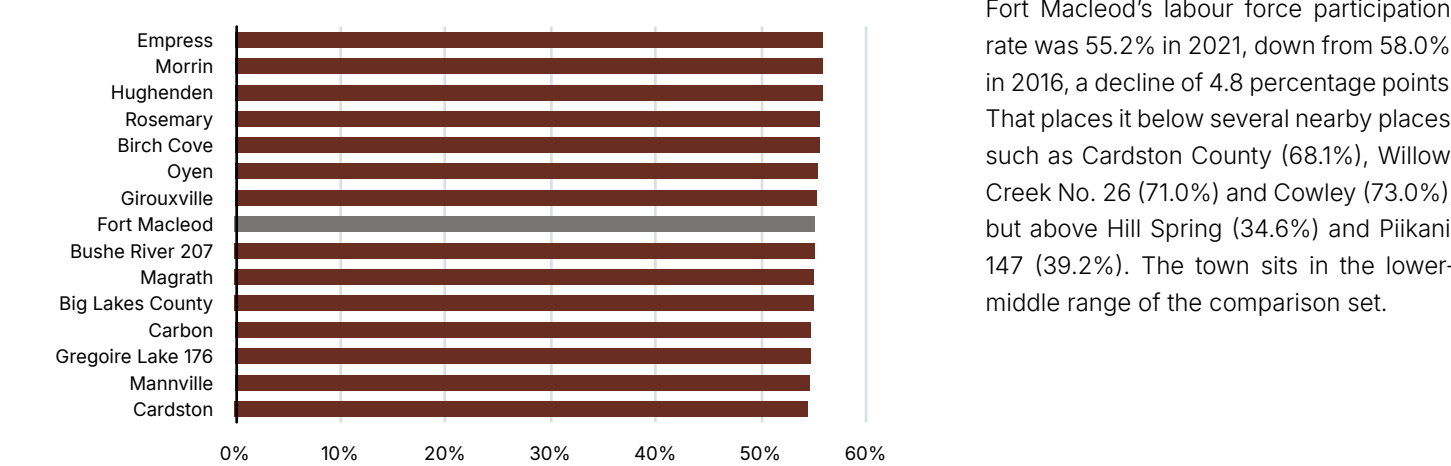


Figure 3.1: Shows the share of the working-age population that is employed or actively looking for work. It helps indicate the level of labour market engagement. (Fort Macleod, 2016-2021)¹

Fort Macleod’s labour force participation rate was 55.2% in 2021, showing that a little more than half of the working-age population was employed or looking for work. The town’s recent pattern is one of decline rather than growth, with the rate down from 58.0% in 2016. That change amounts to a 4.8% drop over five years. With only these two points available, the clearest story is the direction of movement: participation weakened modestly between censuses, but remained above the halfway mark in 2021. The data suggest a smaller share of residents was engaged in the labour market at the later date, without indicating why.



Fort Macleod’s labour force participation rate was 55.2% in 2021, down from 58.0% in 2016, a decline of 4.8 percentage points. That places it below several nearby places such as Cardston County (68.1%), Willow Creek No. 26 (71.0%) and Cowley (73.0%), but above Hill Spring (34.6%) and Piikani 147 (39.2%). The town sits in the lower-middle range of the comparison set.

Figure 3.2: Comparison of Labour Force Participation Rate with other locations (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

Labour Force Status

In Fort Macleod, employed residents remained the largest group at 1,335 in 2021, up from 1,275 in 2016. Those not in the labour force rose to 1,165, while unemployed residents fell to 90.

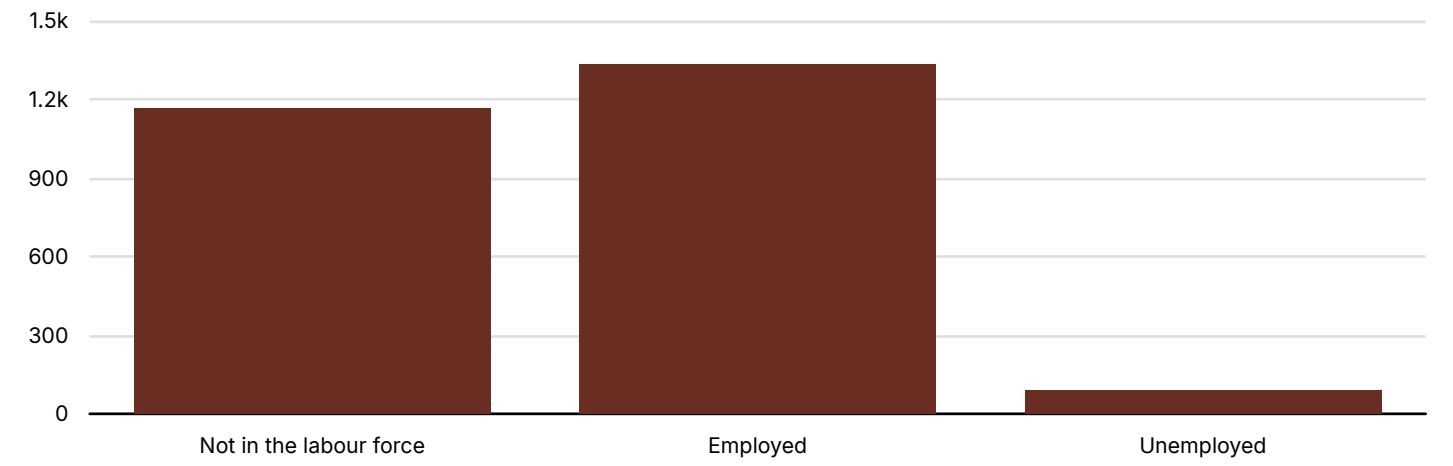


Figure 4.1: Shows whether residents are employed, unemployed, or not in the labour force. It helps indicate how people are participating in the labour market. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In Fort Macleod, the 2021 labour force profile for residents aged 15 years and over shows a workforce that is mostly employed, with a smaller share not in the labour force and a limited unemployed count. The town recorded 1,335 employed residents, 1,165 not in the labour force, and 90 unemployed. That distribution suggests participation is split fairly evenly between those working and those outside the labour market, while unemployment is relatively small. Because only one year is provided, the data do not show change over time. The snapshot offers a clear baseline for future comparison.



Figure 4.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Labour Force Status - Employed (Fort Macleod)¹

Highest Education Level

In Fort Macleod, high school diploma or equivalency was the largest credential group in 2021 at 805 people, up 80.9% from 2016. College certificates followed at 525, while bachelor’s degrees reached 160.

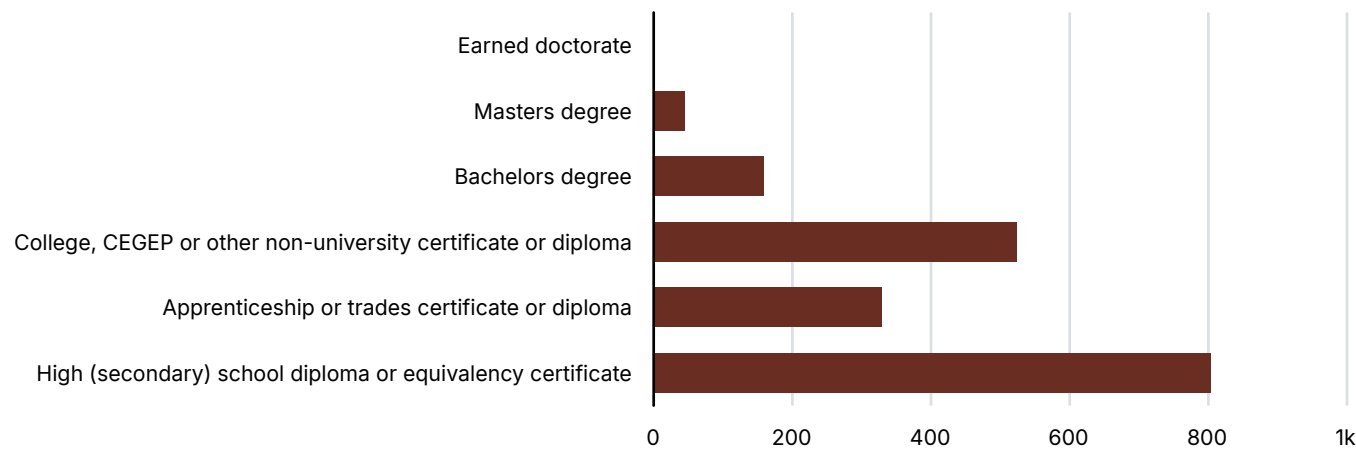


Figure 5.1: Shows the highest level of education completed by residents. It helps indicate the overall educational profile of the population. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In 2021, Fort Macleod’s education profile was led by residents with a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, at 805 people. The next largest groups were college, CEGEP or other non-university credentials, at 525, and apprenticeship or trades certificates or diplomas, at 330. Smaller numbers held a bachelor’s degree, 160, or a master’s degree, 45, while no earned doctorates were recorded. Five-year change was strongest for high school credentials, up 80.9, and college credentials, up 69.3, showing the largest recent gains in those categories.



Figure 5.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Education Credential Ca - High (secondary) school diploma or equivalency certificate (Fort Macleod)¹

Fort Macleod’s education profile in 2021 is led by residents whose highest credential is a high school diploma or equivalency, at 805 people. College, CEGEP or other non-university credentials follow at 525, while apprenticeship or trades credentials account for 330. Smaller groups hold a bachelor’s degree, 160, or a master’s degree, 45. No earned doctorates are recorded. The pattern points to a workforce shaped mainly by secondary, college, and trades credentials rather than advanced graduate training. Taken together, the data show a broad base of mid-level educational attainment.

Work Activity

Fort Macleod’s largest work-activity group in 2021 was people who did not work, at 1,185, up 37.0% from 2016. Full-year full-time workers rose to 815, while part-year or part-time workers fell to 590.

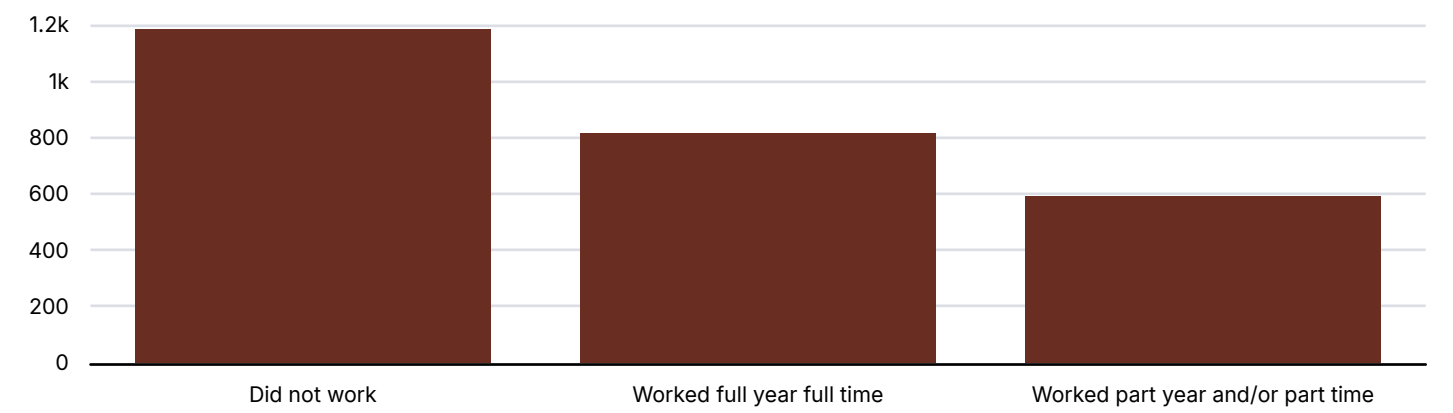


Figure 6.1: Shows the amount of work activity people had during the reference period. It helps indicate attachment to work over the year, not just at a single point in time. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In Fort Macleod, work activity in 2021 was split across three groups within the population aged 15 years and over. The largest group did not work, at 1,185 people, followed by 815 people who worked full year full time and 590 who worked part year and/or part time. The five-year change shows different directions: did not work rose 37.0%, full-year full-time work increased 5.2%, and part-year or part-time work fell 20.3%. Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile.

In 2021, work activity in Fort Macleod was mixed across the population aged 15 and over. The largest group did not work, at 1,185 people, while 815 worked full year full time and 590 worked part year and/or part time. Over five years, the first group rose 37.0%, full-year full-time work increased 5.2%, and part-year or part-time work fell 20.3%.



Figure 6.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Work Activity - Did not work (Fort Macleod)¹

Class of Worker

Fort Macleod’s largest worker group was permanent positions at 1,000 people in 2021, far above casual, seasonal or short-term positions at 130 and fixed-term jobs at 30, showing a workforce centered on permanent employment.

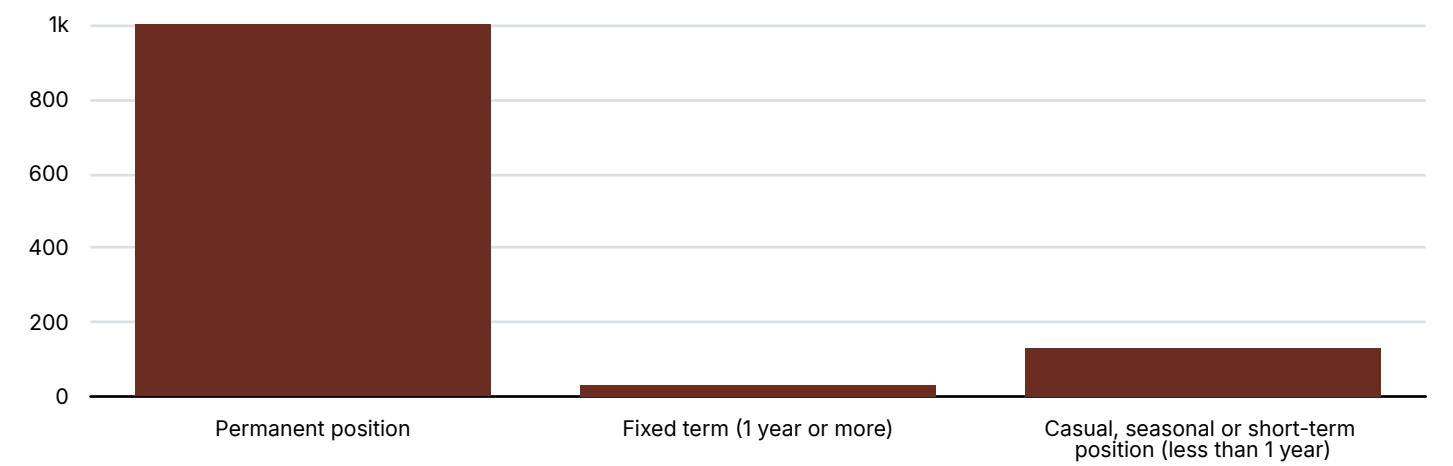


Figure 7.1: Shows whether workers are employees, self-employed, or unpaid family workers. It helps indicate the structure of work in the local economy. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

Fort Macleod’s class of worker profile in 2021 was dominated by permanent positions. Among the population aged 15 years and over, 1,000 people were in permanent positions, compared with 130 in casual, seasonal or short-term positions and 30 in fixed-term positions lasting one year or more. That mix suggests a workforce shaped mainly by stable employment rather than temporary arrangements. No earlier year is provided, so the data do not support a time trend. Within the available snapshot, permanent work clearly accounts for the largest share of local employment structure.



Among Fort Macleod residents aged 15 and over, permanent positions accounted for most workers in 2021, with 1,000 people. Casual, seasonal or short-term positions were a smaller but visible part of the workforce at 130, while fixed-term jobs of one year or more were limited to 30. The pattern suggests a labor market led by stable employment, with a smaller contingent in shorter-term roles. That mix points to relatively steady work structure rather than heavy reliance on temporary positions.

Figure 7.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Class Of Worker - Permanent position (Fort Macleod)¹

Employment Rate

Fort Macleod’s employment rate fell to 51.5% in 2021, down 3.9% from 53.6% in 2016. The five-year decline reflects a smaller share of the labour force employed.

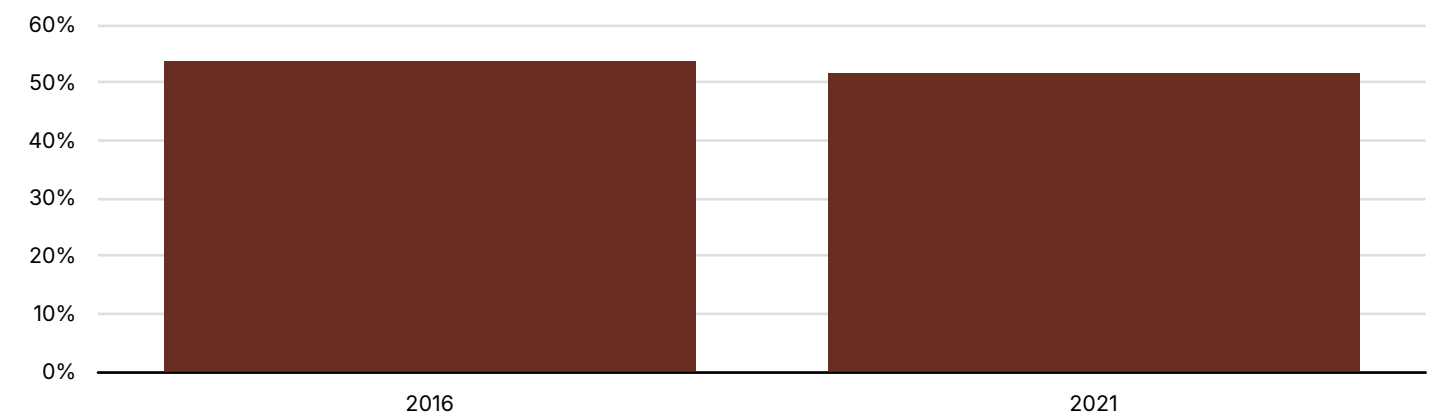


Figure 8.1: Shows the share of the working-age population that is employed. It helps indicate overall labour market health and how fully local talent is being used. (Fort Macleod, 2016-2021)¹

Fort Macleod’s employment rate was 51.5% in 2021, down from 53.6% in 2016. That leaves it 3.9% below its 2016 level over the five-year period. Measured for the labour force aged 15 years and over, the figures point to a modest decline in the share of residents who were employed. The 2021 result suggests a softer employment position than five years earlier, without showing a sharper shift in the available data.

Fort Macleod’s employment rate was 51.5% in 2021, down from 53.6% in 2016 for the labour force aged 15 and over. The five-year change was -3.9%, pointing to a modest decline over the period. Regionally, Fort Macleod sat below Cardston County at 65.1% and Nanton at 58.4%, but slightly below Pincher Creek at 53.0% and above Claresholm at 47.2%. The pattern places Fort Macleod in the middle of the local comparison set, with employment remaining just over half of the working-age population.

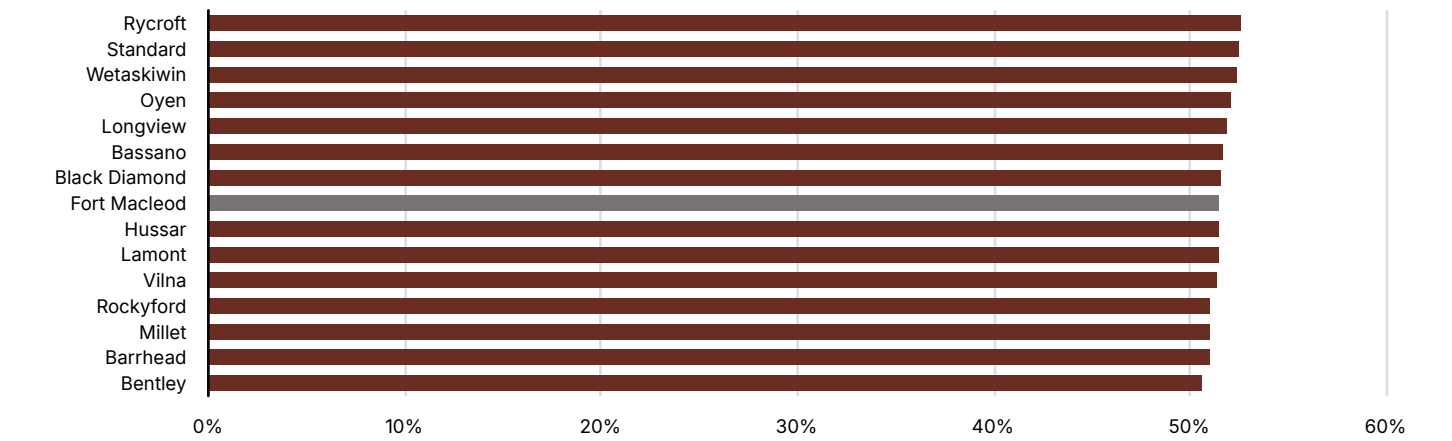


Figure 8.2: Comparison of Employment Rate with other locations (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

Work Activity

Fort Macleod’s largest work-activity group in 2021 was people who did not work, at 1,185, up 37.0% from 2016. Full-year full-time workers rose to 815, while part-year or part-time workers fell to 590.

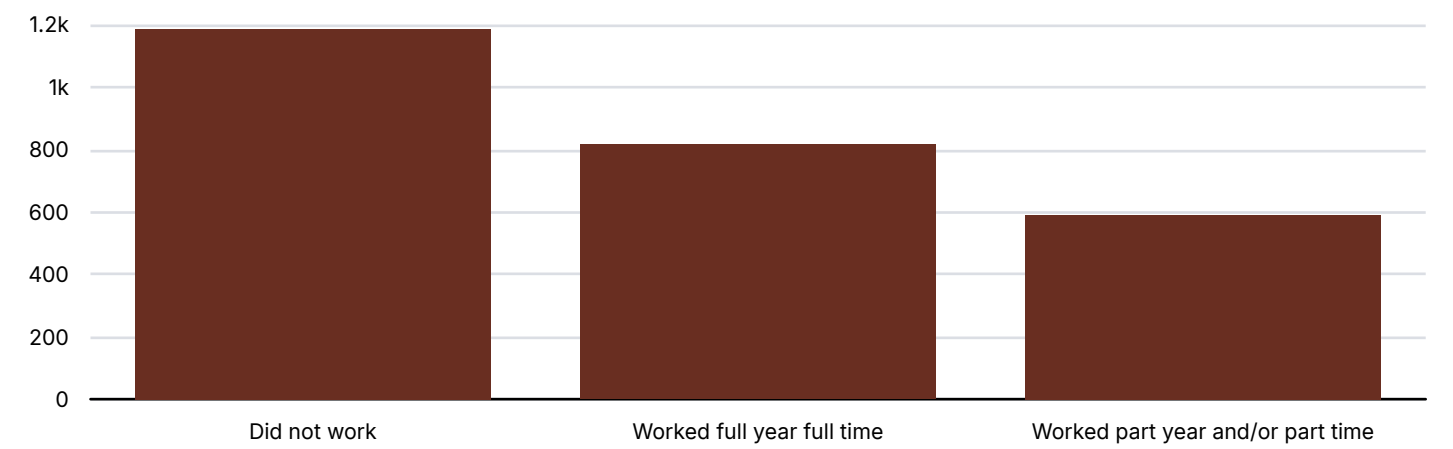
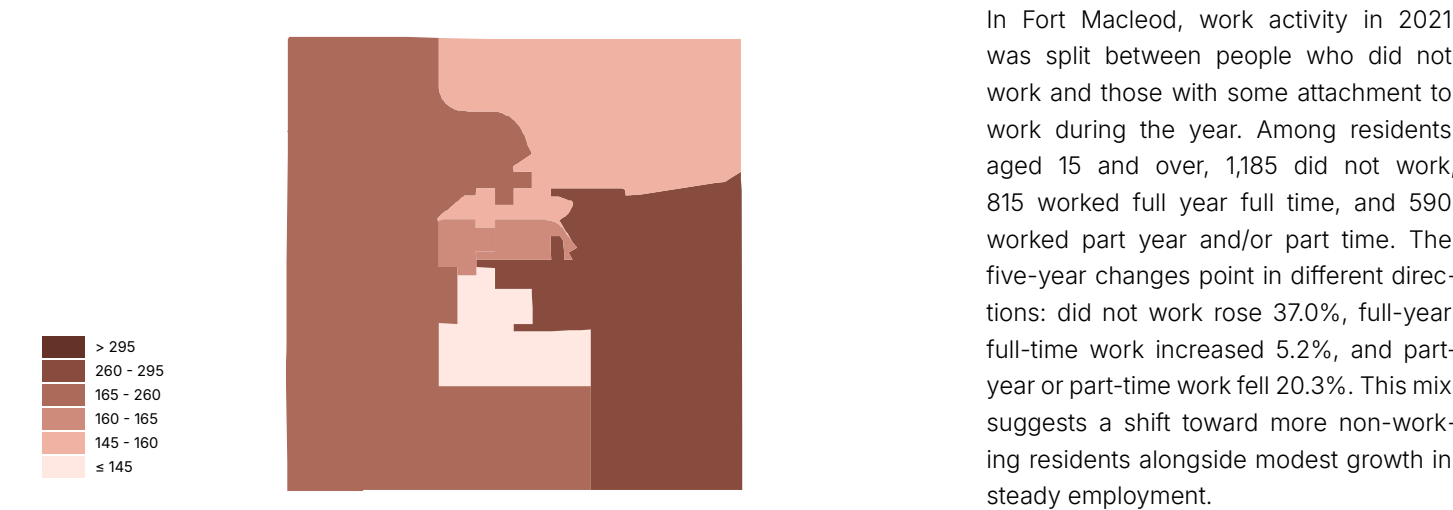


Figure 9.1: Shows the amount of work activity people had during the reference period. It helps indicate attachment to work over the year, not just at a single point in time. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In 2021, work activity in Fort Macleod showed a clear split between those who did not work and those with some attachment to work during the year. Among people aged 15 and over, 1,185 did not work, compared with 815 who worked full year full time and 590 who worked part year and/or part time. The five-year trend points in different directions. The number who did not work increased by 37.0%, while full-year full-time work rose 5.2%. Part-year and/or part-time work fell 20.3%. That mix suggests weaker recent momentum in intermittent work, alongside modest growth in full-time work and a larger rise in non-work status. Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile.



In Fort Macleod, work activity in 2021 was split between people who did not work and those with some attachment to work during the year. Among residents aged 15 and over, 1,185 did not work, 815 worked full year full time, and 590 worked part year and/or part time. The five-year changes point in different directions: did not work rose 37.0%, full-year full-time work increased 5.2%, and part-year or part-time work fell 20.3%. This mix suggests a shift toward more non-working residents alongside modest growth in steady employment.

Figure 9.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Work Activity - Did not work (Fort Macleod)¹

Labour Force Participation Rate

Fort Macleod’s labour force participation rate was 55.2% in 2021, down from 58.0% in 2016. The five-year change was -4.8%, showing lower labour market engagement over the period.

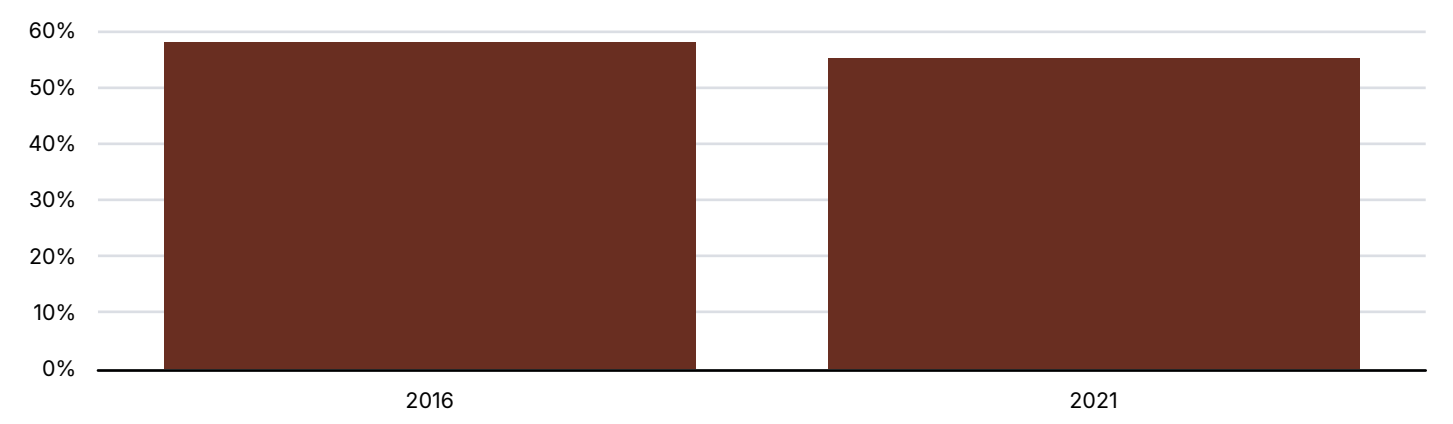


Figure 10.1: Shows the share of the working-age population that is employed or actively looking for work. It helps indicate the level of labour market engagement. (Fort Macleod, 2016-2021)¹

Fort Macleod’s labour force participation rate was lower in 2021 than in 2016, showing a modest decline over the five-year period. In 2021, 55.2% of the total population was in the labour force, down from 58.0% in 2016. The 2.8-point drop, equal to a 4.8% five-year change, points to a softer level of labour market engagement in the latest census year. The pattern is straight-forward: participation remained above half of the population, but it moved down rather than up across the period.

Fort Macleod’s labour force participation rate was 55.2% in 2021, down from 58.0% in 2016. The five-year change was -4.8%, pointing to a modest decline in labour market engagement among the total population. That level sat below Cardston County at 68.1% and Nanton at 64.2%, but above Claresholm at 52.6% and Cardston at 54.5%. It was close to Magrath at 55.1% and Pincher Creek at 57.2%. The town’s 2021 rate was mid-range among the comparable locations provided.

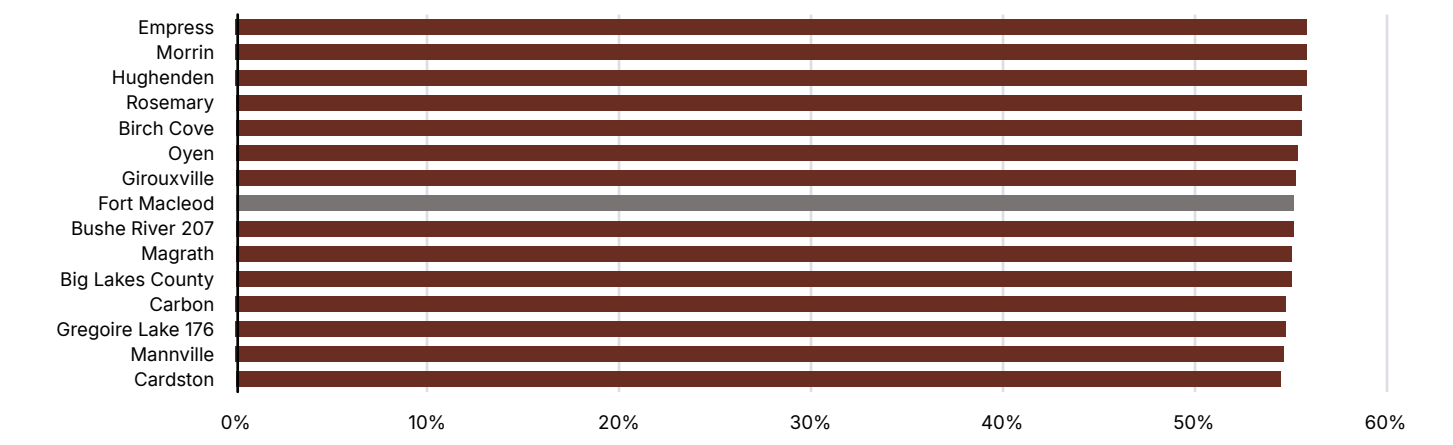


Figure 10.2: Comparison of Labour Force Participation Rate with other locations (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

Employment Rate

Fort Macleod’s employment rate fell to 51.5% in 2021, down 3.9% from 53.6% in 2016. The five-year decline reflects a smaller share of the labour force employed.

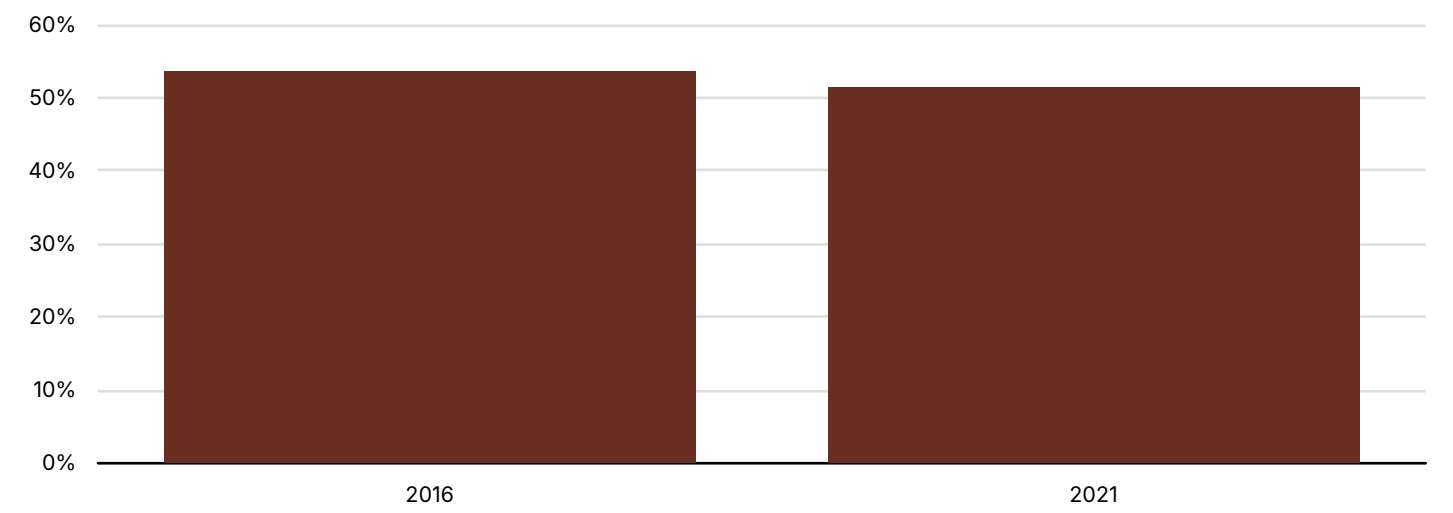
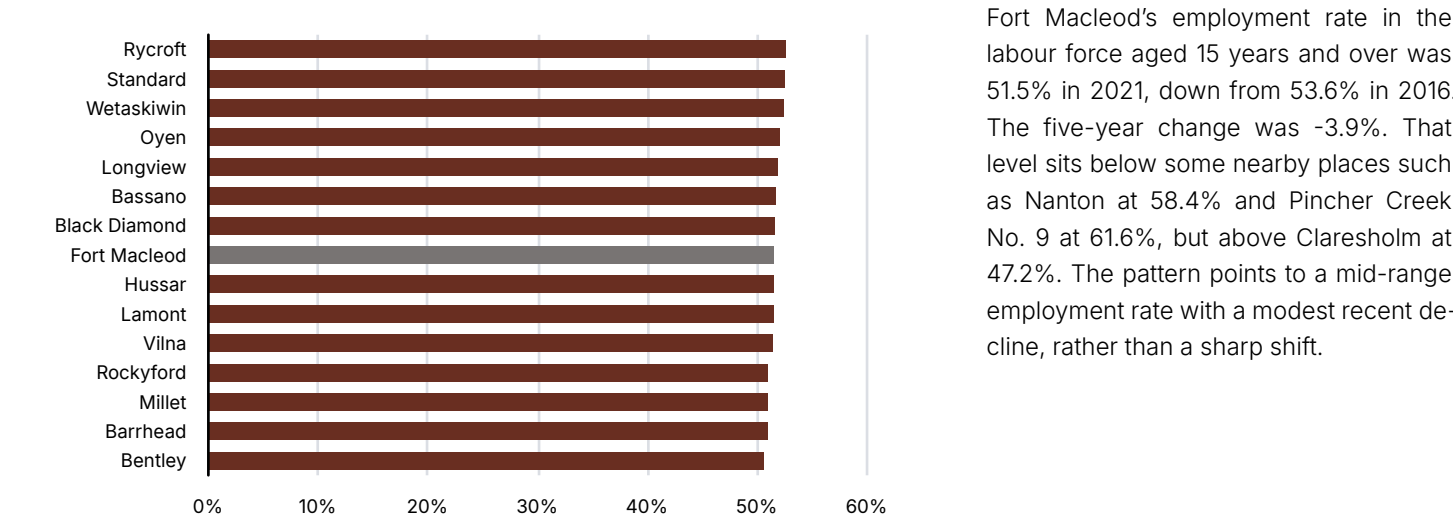


Figure 11.1: Shows the share of the working-age population that is employed. It helps indicate overall labour market health and how fully local talent is being used. (Fort Macleod, 2016-2021)¹

Fort Macleod’s employment rate declined modestly over the period shown. In 2016, 53.6% of the labour force aged 15 years and over was employed, and by 2021 the rate had fallen to 51.5%. That represents a 3.9% change over five years, pointing to a gentle downward trend rather than a sharp shift. The figures suggest a labour market that remained close to the halfway mark but lost some ground by 2021. With only two observations available, the data show direction and scale, but not the reasons behind the change.



Fort Macleod’s employment rate in the labour force aged 15 years and over was 51.5% in 2021, down from 53.6% in 2016. The five-year change was -3.9%. That level sits below some nearby places such as Nanton at 58.4% and Pincher Creek No. 9 at 61.6%, but above Claresholm at 47.2%. The pattern points to a mid-range employment rate with a modest recent decline, rather than a sharp shift.

Figure 11.2: Comparison of Employment Rate with other locations (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

Labour Force Status

In Fort Macleod, employed residents remained the largest group at 1,335 in 2021, up from 1,275 in 2016. Those not in the labour force rose to 1,165, while unemployed residents fell to 90.

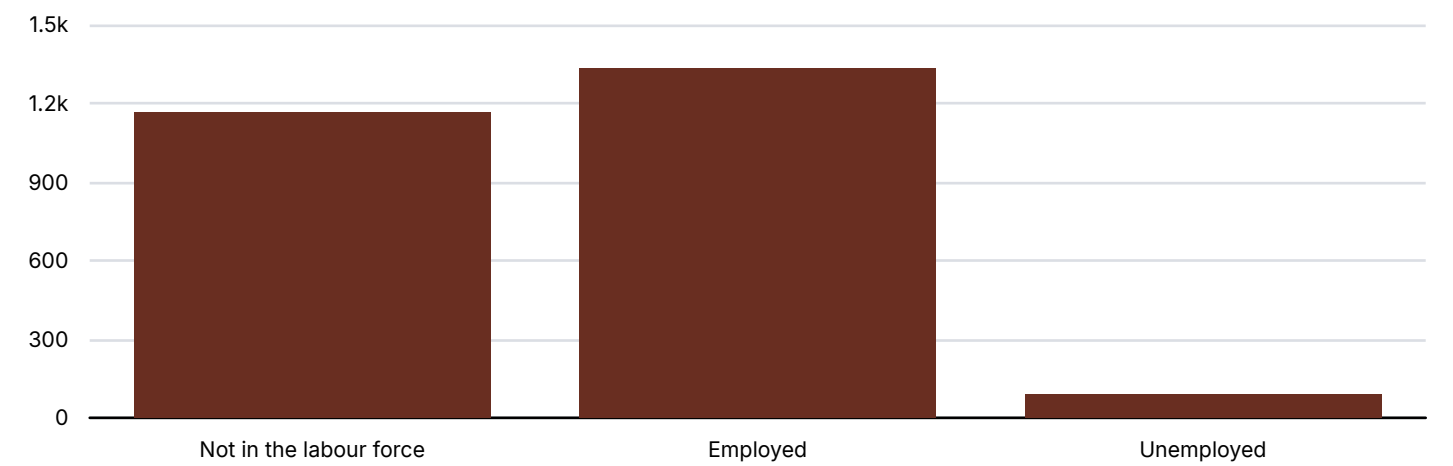
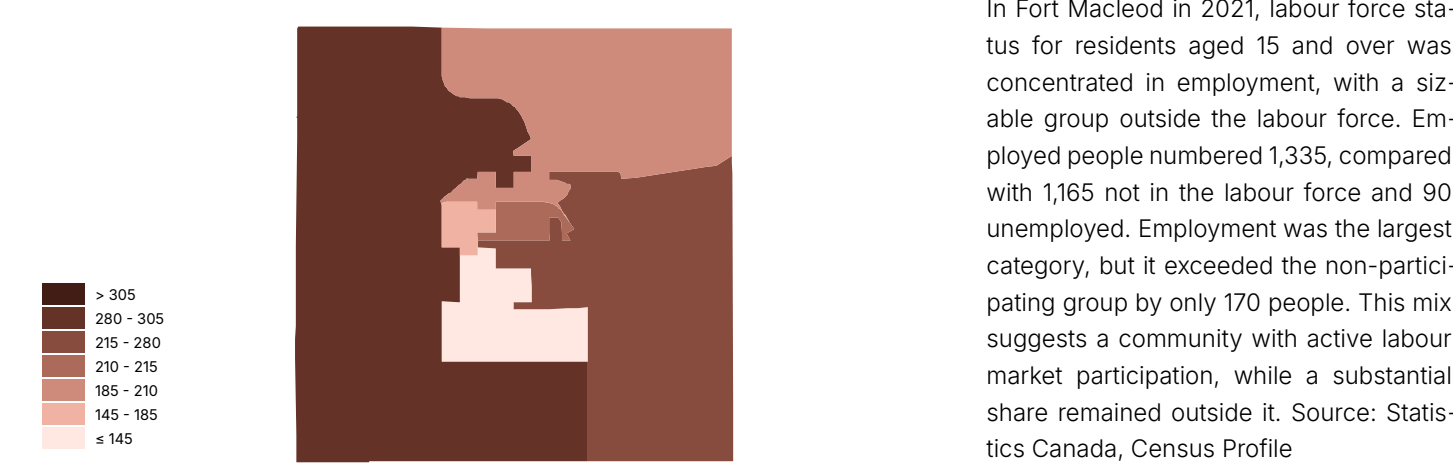


Figure 12.1: Shows whether residents are employed, unemployed, or not in the labour force. It helps indicate how people are participating in the labour market. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In 2021, labour force status in Fort Macleod was split between people working, people not in the labour force, and a small unemployed group. Among residents aged 15 and over, 1,335 were employed, 1,165 were not in the labour force, and 90 were unemployed. That distribution means employment accounted for just over half of the total, while those outside the labour force made up a little under half. The unemployed group was much smaller than either of the other two categories. With only one census year available, the data shows the labour market structure clearly but does not support a time-trend comparison.



In Fort Macleod in 2021, labour force status for residents aged 15 and over was concentrated in employment, with a sizable group outside the labour force. Employed people numbered 1,335, compared with 1,165 not in the labour force and 90 unemployed. Employment was the largest category, but it exceeded the non-participating group by only 170 people. This mix suggests a community with active labour market participation, while a substantial share remained outside it. Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile

Figure 12.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Labour Force Status - Employed (Fort Macleod)¹

Resident Labour Force

Fort Macleod’s resident labour force remained concentrated in construction and health care and social assistance, at 210 people each in 2021. Other services grew fastest, rising 111.1% to 95 people since 2016.

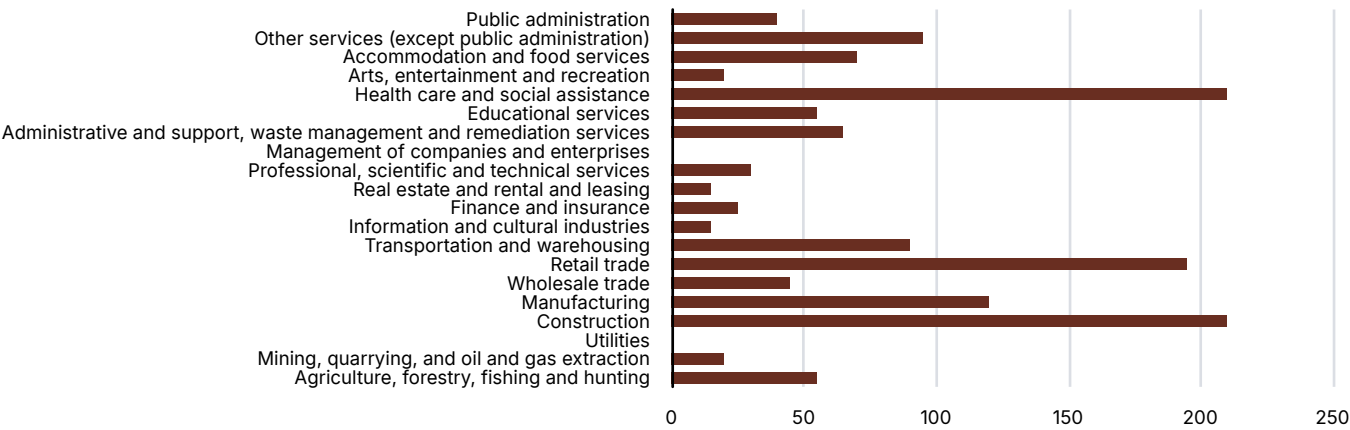


Figure 13.1: Shows the number of residents who are in the labour force. It helps indicate the size of the locally available workforce. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In 2021, Fort Macleod’s resident labour force was spread across a mix of sectors, with construction and health care and social assistance each accounting for 210 people. Retail trade followed at 195, while manufacturing had 120 and other services 95. Smaller counts appeared in information and cultural industries and real estate and rental and leasing, both at 15 people. The five-year pattern shows uneven movement. Construction rose 16.7%, retail trade increased 25.8%, and transportation and warehousing grew 28.6%. By contrast, manufacturing fell 14.3%, accommodation and food services declined 36.4%, and several small sectors also contracted. This points to modest growth in some service and trade activities alongside weakness in others.

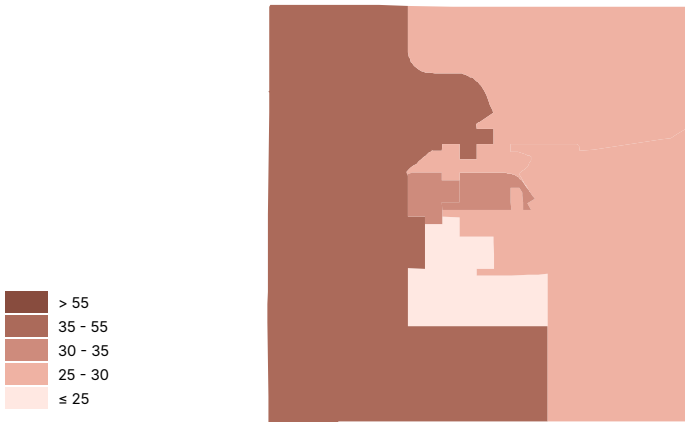


Figure 13.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Industry Sector - Construction (Fort Macleod)¹

Fort Macleod’s 2021 resident labour force was concentrated in a few sectors, with construction and health care and social assistance each at 210 people, followed by retail trade at 195 and manufacturing at 120. Several smaller sectors also showed notable movement, including other services at 95 and transportation at 90. Within the town, the largest employment bases were still tied to trades and community services, while some sectors remained minimal or absent in individual dissemination areas, showing a patchy local labour profile.

Employment by Sector

Educational services remained the largest employer in Fort Macleod in 2025 at 1,450 people, up 2.8% from 2024 but down 2.2% over five years. Health care reached 353, up 41.2%.

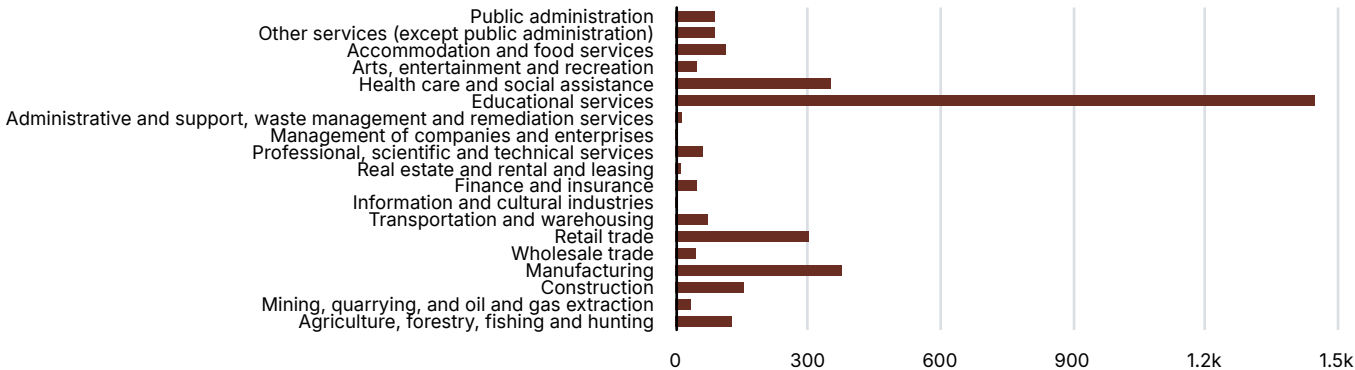


Figure 14.1: Shows how employment is distributed across industry sectors. It helps indicate which sectors account for the largest share of local jobs. (Fort Macleod, 2025)²

Fort Macleod's employment mix in 2025 is led by educational services, with 1,450 workers, far ahead of health care and social assistance at 353 and manufacturing at 379. Retail trade also stands out at 302. Several sectors changed sharply over the year, including professional, scientific and technical services up 72.2% and wholesale trade down 60.8%. The profile is concentrated in a few large sectors.

Employment in Fort Macleod is concentrated in a few sectors, with educational services accounting for 1,450 people in 2025, far ahead of any other industry. Manufacturing is the next largest employer at 379, followed by health care and social assistance at 353 and retail trade at 302. Recent change is mixed: health care rose 41.2% and retail gained 10.6%, while manufacturing fell 39.1% and wholesale trade dropped 60.8%. The pattern suggests a workforce led by services, with some sharp sector shifts.

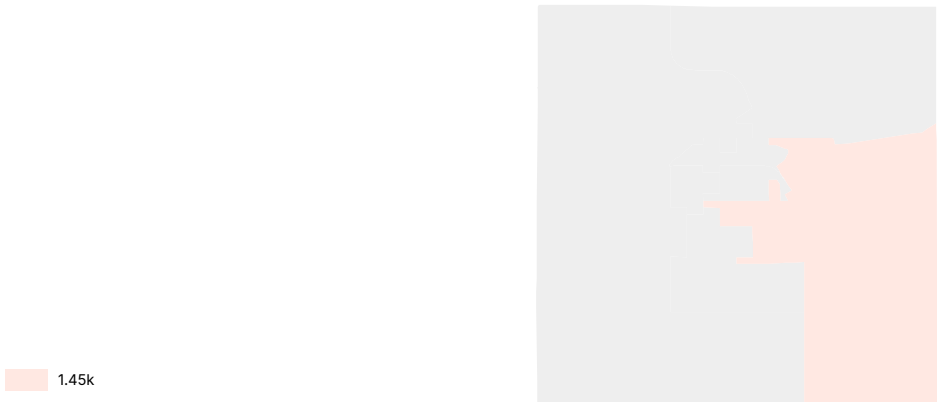


Figure 14.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Naics - Educational services (Fort Macleod)²

Employed Residents by Occupation

Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations became the largest group in Fort Macleod in 2021 at 425 people, up 57.4% from 2016. Sales and service followed with 370 people.

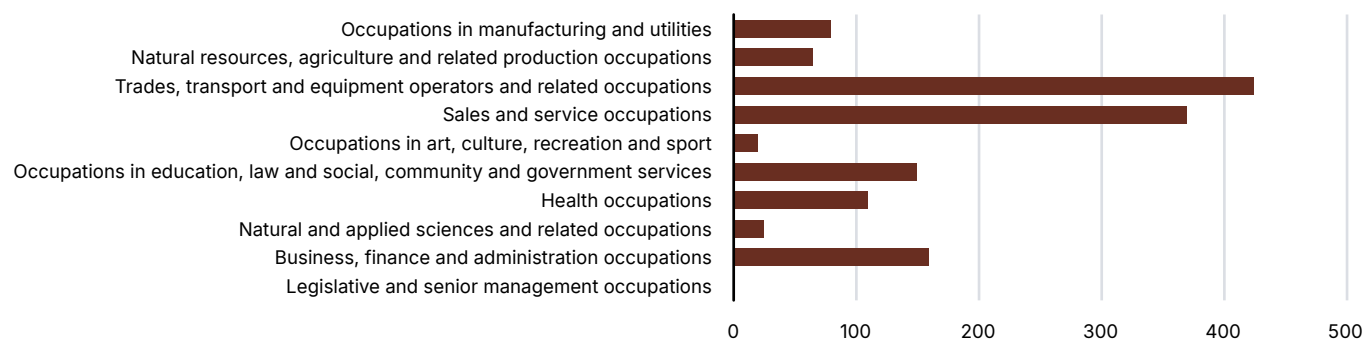


Figure 15.1: Shows the occupations held by employed residents. It helps indicate the community's skill mix and the kinds of work people do. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In 2021, Fort Macleod’s employed residents were concentrated in trades, transport and equipment operator jobs, with 425 people, followed by sales and service at 370. Business, finance and administration accounted for 160, and education, law, social, community and government services for 150. Health occupations had 110 workers, while manufacturing and utilities had 80. Over five years, trades, transport and equipment operator jobs rose 57.4%, and natural resources, agriculture and related production grew 44.4%. Legislative and senior management occupations fell to zero.

In 2021, Fort Macleod’s employed residents were concentrated in trades, transport and equipment operator jobs, with 425 people, alongside 370 in sales and service. Business, finance and administration accounted for 160 people, and education, law, social, community and government services for 150. Health had 110, while manufacturing and utilities had 80. Trades also showed the strongest five-year growth at 57.4%, well ahead of sales and service at 17.5% and business, finance and administration at 10.3%. The mix points to a workforce led by practical and service-oriented occupations, with smaller shares in management, sciences and arts.



Figure 15.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Occupation - Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations (Fort Macleod)¹

Data Sources

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

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