



CARDSTON

Quality of Life Report

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Executive Summary

Cardston in 2021 appears as a settled town with a clear social and cultural centre of gravity, but also signs of gradual change in how people live, earn, and form households. Christianity remained the dominant religious affiliation by a wide margin, English was overwhelmingly the main mother tongue, and the population was still led by non-immigrants rather than newcomers. Reported ethnic origins were anchored in long-established ancestries, especially English, German, and Scottish, though their recent movement was uneven rather than uniform. The town's median age changed little over the most recent five years, and population density continued to edge upward, pointing to modest growth within a compact settlement pattern rather than a major shift in scale.

Family and household patterns still leaned strongly toward couple and married-family living, but the mix was not static. Married couples without children formed the largest family type, while married couples with children declined and one-parent families increased. A similar pattern appears in households: couple-family households remained the largest categories, yet one-person households grew noticeably and renter households rose much faster than owner households, even though ownership still dominated overall. These shifts suggest a community whose traditional household structure remains prominent but is becoming somewhat more varied. Immigration also remained a smaller part of the population than non-immigrant residents, though immigrant counts increased over five years, and arrivals were concentrated most often in the working-age years.

The economic and housing picture is mixed but generally stable. Household incomes were spread across a broad range, with stronger representation in middle and upper-middle brackets and notable growth at the higher end. Shelter costs increased for both owners and renters, with renter costs rising faster, yet the reported share of households in core housing need remained very small. Education data also point to a solid base, with high school completion clearly more common than having no credential, and growth in high school, college, and bachelor's attainment alongside a decline in apprenticeship and trades certificates. The result is a portrait of Cardston as a community that remains concentrated in several core characteristics while gradually becoming more varied in its households, tenure patterns, and population composition.

Religion

Christian residents are the largest group in Cardston at 2,710 people, followed by 760 with no religion and 85 reporting Traditional spirituality. Other religions and spiritual traditions total 10 people.

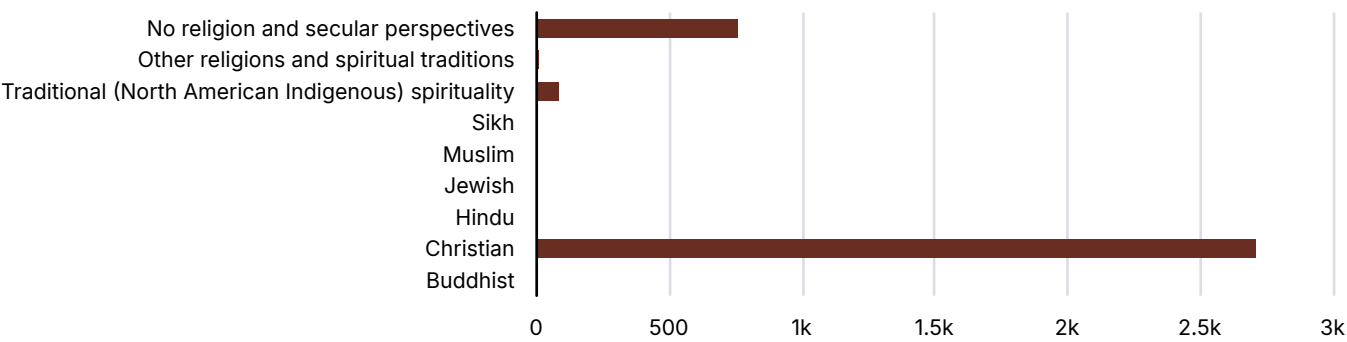


Figure 1.1: Shows residents' religious affiliation. It helps indicate the spiritual and faith-based diversity of the community. (Cardston, 2021)¹

In 2021, Cardston's religious profile was dominated by Christianity, with 2,710 people identifying as Christian in the population living in private households. The next largest category was no religion and secular perspectives, at 760 people, while traditional North American Indigenous spirituality accounted for 85 people. Other religions were recorded in very small numbers: 10 people reported other religions and spiritual traditions, and Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh counts were each zero. The pattern suggests a community with limited religious diversity and a clear concentration in one affiliation, alongside a smaller non-religious population.

In Cardston, religion in 2021 was dominated by Christianity, with 2,710 people identifying as Christian. Another 760 reported no religion or secular perspectives, while 85 identified with Traditional (North American Indigenous) spirituality and 10 with other religions and spiritual traditions. The remaining listed faiths were zero. The pattern is strongly concentrated and narrowly defined. Among the named subareas, Christian counts ranged from 225 to 740, while no religion ranged from 40 to 180, showing some local variation but the same broad mix.



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

Family Type

Cardston's largest family type in 2021 was married couples without children at 415 people, up 1.2% from 2016. Married couples with children fell to 360, while one-parent families rose to 155, up 24.0%.

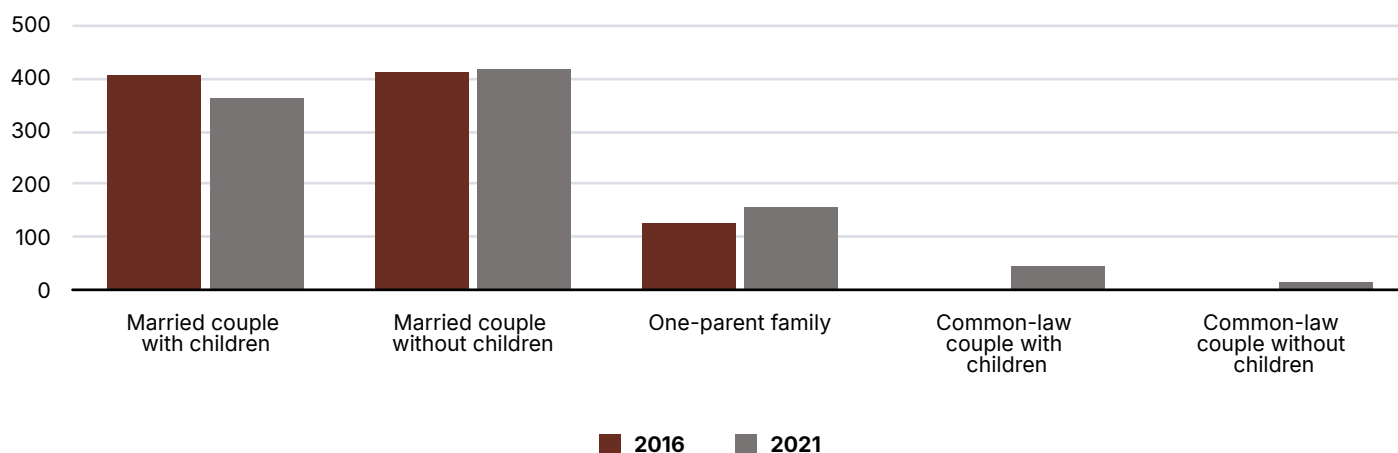


Figure 2.1: Shows the mix of family types, such as couple families and lone-parent families. It helps indicate the structure of family life in the community. (Cardston, 2016-2021)¹

In Cardston, the 2021 family picture was dominated by couple families, with married couples without children forming the largest group at 415 people. Married couples with children were also sizable at 360, while one-parent families accounted for 155. Common-law families were much smaller, with 45 common-law couples with children and 15 without children. The clearest time trend is the rise in one-parent families, which increased by 24% over five years. By contrast, married couples with children fell by 11.1%, while married couples without children edged up 1.2%. The mix points to a family structure led by married couples, with smaller common-law and one-parent segments.

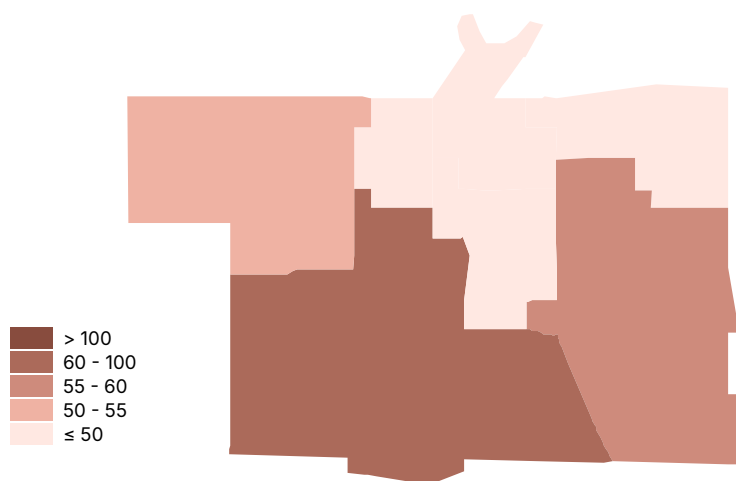


Figure 2.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Family Type - Married couple without children (Cardston)¹

In Cardston's census families in private households, married couples form the largest family type, especially those without children. In 2021, there were 415 married couple families without children and 360 with children, while one-parent families numbered 155. Common-law families were much smaller, at 45 with children and 15 without children. Over five years, one-parent families grew by 24%, while married couples with children fell by 11.1%, showing a shift toward fewer child-rearing married couples and more lone-parent families.

Ethnic Origin

Cardston’s largest ethnic origin group was English at 1,510 people, down 26.0% over five years. German followed at 635, while Canadian fell 47.2% to 475, the steepest decline reported.

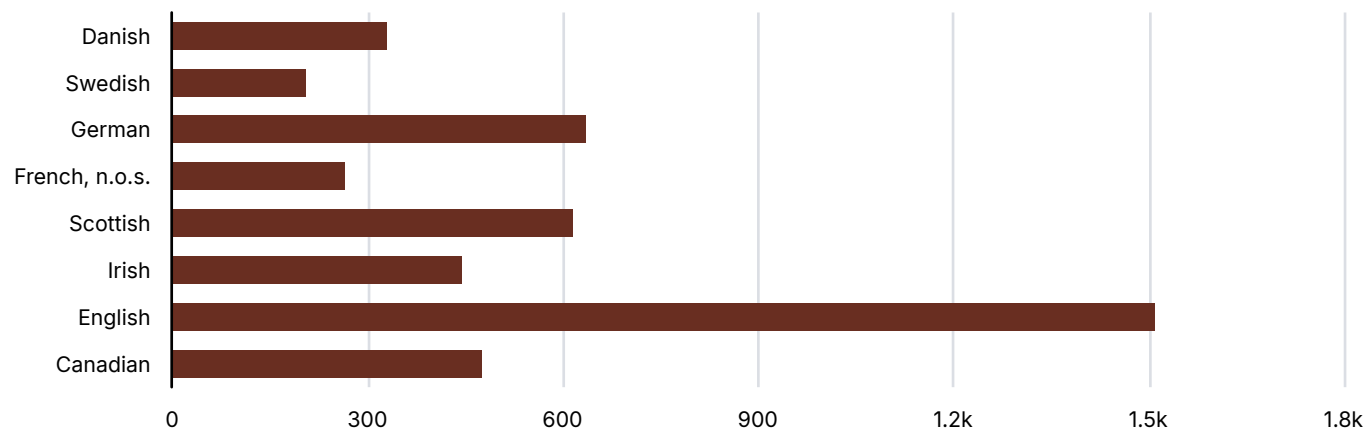
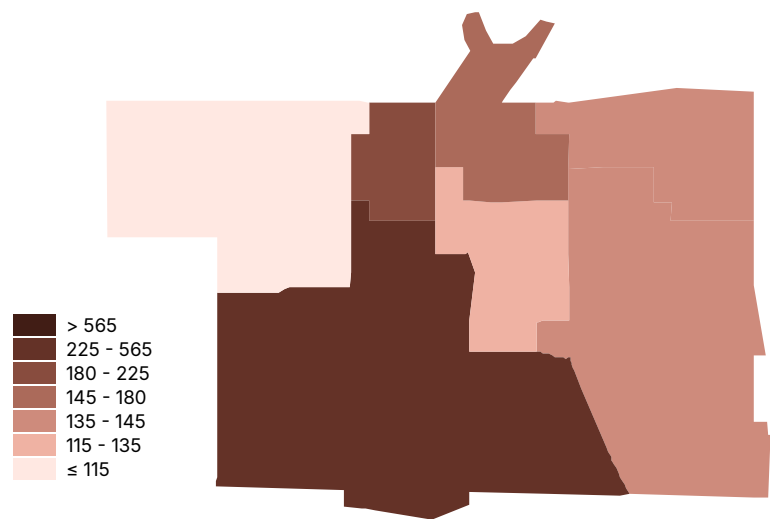


Figure 3.1: Shows the ethnic or cultural origins reported by residents. It helps indicate ancestry patterns and the community's cultural makeup. (Cardston, 2021)¹

Cardston’s ethnic origin profile in 2021 shows a mix of long-established ancestries, with several categories moving in different directions over five years. The largest group listed was English, at 1,510 people, followed by German at 635 and Scottish at 615. Some origins declined over the period, including Canadian at 475, down 47.2%, and Scottish, down 34.9%. English also fell 26.0%, while Swedish slipped 12.8% and German edged down 5.2%. A few categories grew. Irish rose to 445 people, up 9.9%, and Danish reached 330, up 10.0%. French, n.o.s. stood at 265 people in 2021, with no change value reported. The pattern suggests a community where a few reported origins remain prominent, but recent shifts are uneven rather than uniform.



In 2021, Cardston’s reported ethnic origins in private households were led by English, at 1,510 people, followed by German at 635 and Scottish at 615. Canadian origin remained sizable at 475, while Irish stood at 445. Over five years, English and Scottish declined, but Irish and Danish increased, suggesting a mixed pattern of contraction and modest growth across origins.

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

Mother Tongue

English remained the largest mother tongue in Cardston at 3,410 people, up 2.1% over five years. Spanish posted the fastest growth among listed languages, rising 66.7% to 25 people.

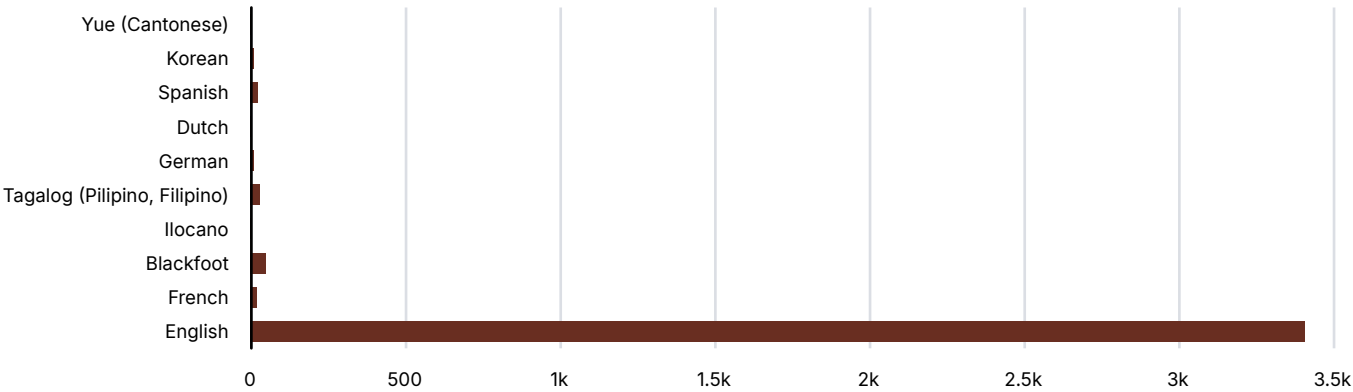


Figure 4.1: Shows the first language learned and still understood by residents. It helps indicate the linguistic roots of the population. (Cardston, 2021)¹

Cardston’s 2021 mother tongue profile is strongly centered on English, with 3,410 people reporting it as their first language learned and still understood. Among other languages, Blackfoot stands out at 50 people after a 42.9% increase over five years, while Spanish reached 25 people, up 66.7%. By contrast, French fell to 20 people and German to 10, both down 33.3%. Smaller communities such as Tagalog, Ilocano, Dutch, Korean, and Yue remained limited in size.

In Cardston, English was by far the main mother tongue in 2021, with 3,410 people reporting it. The next largest languages were Blackfoot at 50, Tagalog at 30, Spanish at 25, and French at 20. Smaller counts were recorded for German, Korean, Ilocano, Dutch, and Yue, each at 5 or 10 people. English also showed modest 5-year growth of 2.1%, while Spanish rose 66.7%.

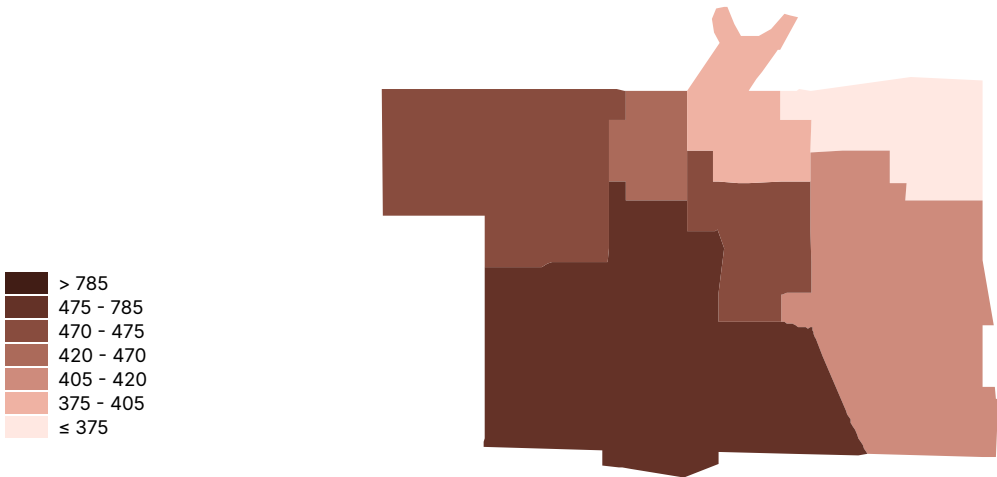


Figure 4.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Language - English (Cardston)¹

Population Density

Cardston’s population density reached 434.1 people per square kilometre in 2021, up 3.98% from 2016. The earlier five-year period also rose, from 414.1 in 2011 to 417.5 in 2016.

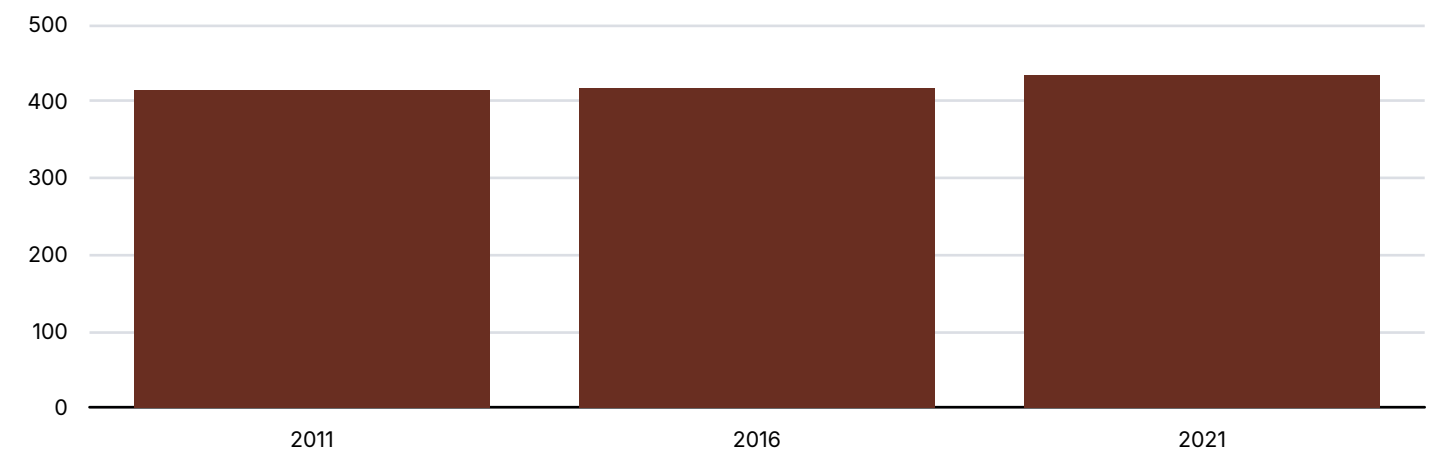


Figure 5.1: Shows how many people live per unit of land area. It helps indicate how compact or spread out the population is. (Cardston, 2011-2021)¹

Cardston's population density has edged upward over the last decade, suggesting a slightly more compact settlement pattern within its land area. The town recorded 414.1 people per km2 in 2011, rising to 417.5 in 2016 and 434.1 in 2021. That is a modest increase of 0.8% over the first five-year period, followed by a stronger 4.0% rise in the next. The pattern points to gradual growth rather than a sharp shift.

Cardston's population density was 434.1 people per km2 in 2021, up from 417.5 in 2016 and 414.1 in 2011. That places it among the denser places in the comparison set, close to Nanton at 423.9 and Magrath at 422.0, and above Claresholm at 362.1 and Pincher Creek at 367.1. By contrast, nearby rural areas such as Cardston County and Blood 148A remained near 1 person per km2. The pattern points to a compact settlement footprint.

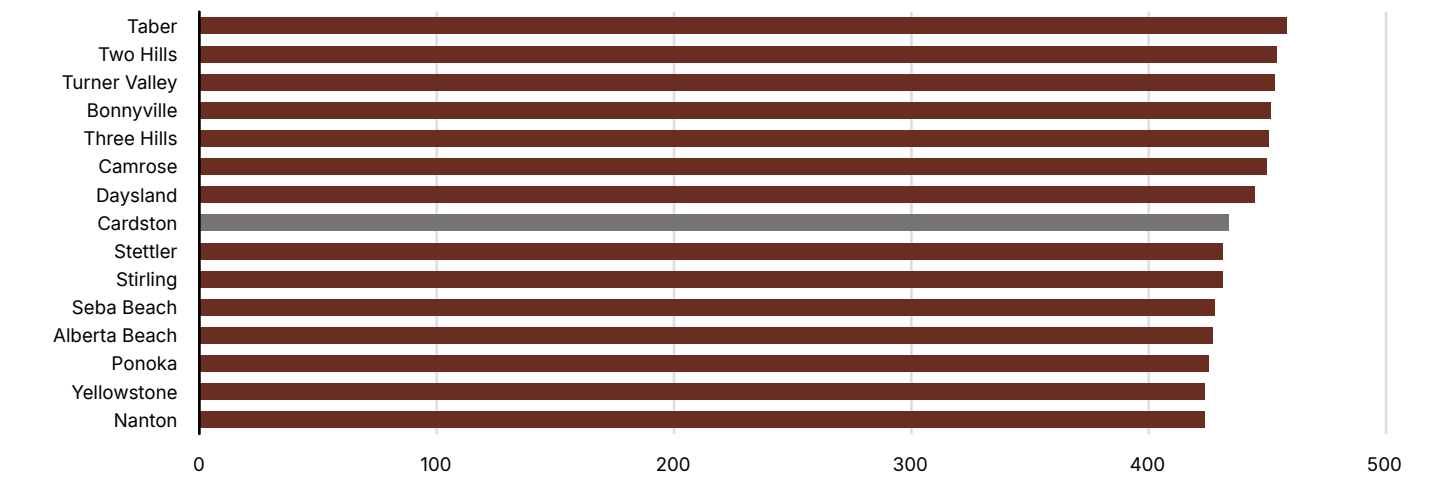


Figure 5.2: Comparison of Population Density with other locations (Cardston, 2021)¹

Highest Education Level

In Cardston, high school diploma or equivalency was the largest credential group in 2021 at 925 people, up 117.7% from 2016. College credentials followed at 495, while apprenticeships fell to 205.

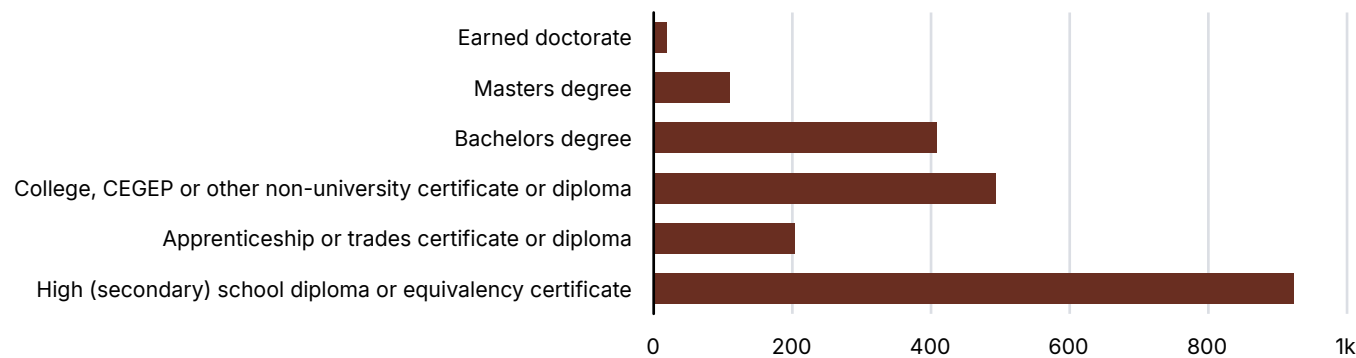


Figure 6.1: Shows the highest level of education completed by residents. It helps indicate the overall educational profile of the population. (Cardston, 2021)¹

In Cardston, the 2021 education profile for residents age 15 and over in private households shows growth across several credentials over the previous five years. The largest group was high school diploma or equivalency, at 925 people, with a 117.7% increase. College, CEGEP or other non-university certificates reached 495, while bachelor’s degrees totaled 410, up 86.4%. Apprenticeship or trades certificates fell to 205, down 42.3%. Masters degrees numbered 110 and earned doctorates 20.

In Cardston, the 2021 education profile for residents age 15 and over is centered on secondary and postsecondary credentials. The largest group is those with a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, at 925 people, followed by college, CEGEP or other non-university certificates at 495 and bachelor’s degrees at 410. Smaller counts appear at the upper end, with 110 people holding a master’s degree and 20 with an earned doctorate. The five-year change is mixed: high school credentials rose by 117.7%, bachelor’s degrees by 86.4%, and master’s degrees by 57.1%, while apprenticeship or trades credentials fell by 42.3%.

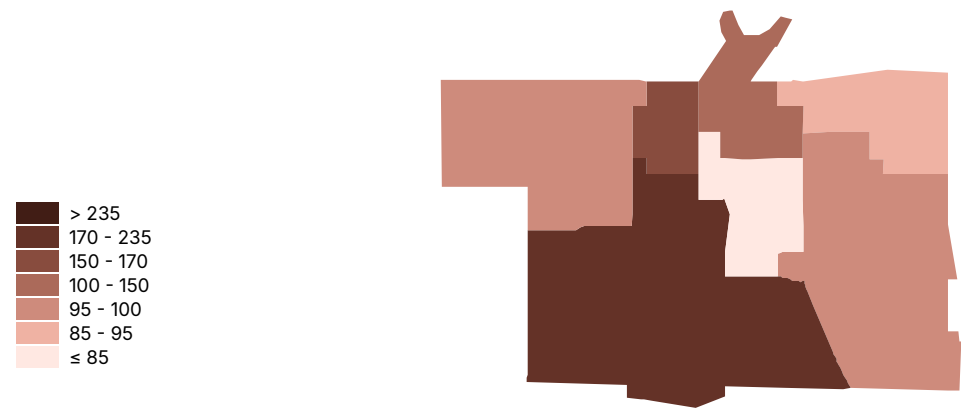


Figure 6.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Education Credential Ca - High (secondary) school diploma or equivalency certificate (Cardston)¹

Household Type

Cardston's largest household type in 2021 was couple-family households without children, at 380 households, down 2.6% from 2016. Couple-family households with children fell to 340, while one-person households rose to 280.

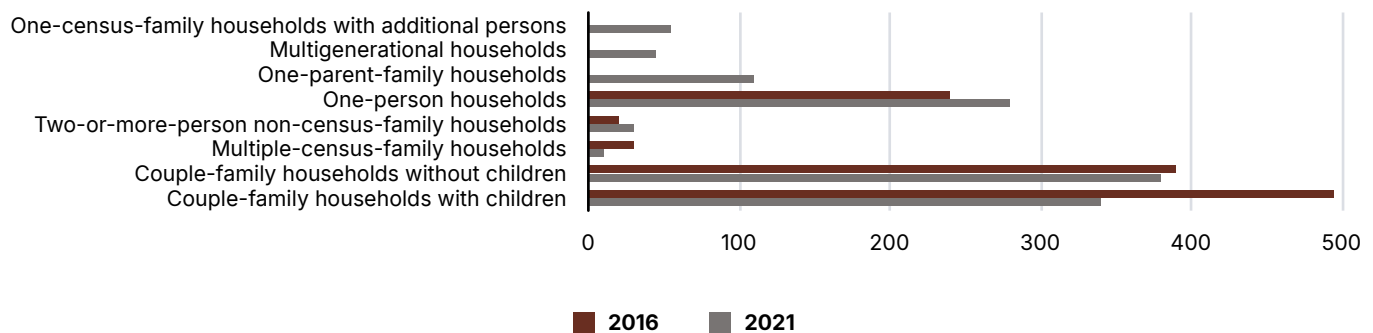


Figure 7.1: Shows the mix of household types, including one-person, family, and non-family households. It helps indicate how residents are organized across living arrangements. (Cardston, 2016-2021)¹

Cardston's household mix in 2021 was led by couple-family households without children, at 380 households, followed closely by couple-family households with children, at 340. One-person households also formed a sizable group at 280, while one-parent-family households numbered 110. Looking back five years, the pattern was mixed. One-person households rose 16.7%, and two-or-more-person non-census-family households increased 50%, while couple-family households with children fell 31.3% and multiple-census-family households dropped 66.7%.

In Cardston's private households in 2021, couple-family living arrangements remained the largest category, but the mix was varied. Households with children numbered 340, while couple-family households without children reached 380. One-person households were also substantial at 280 and rose 16.7% over five years. By contrast, couple-family households with children edged down 2.6%. Smaller categories included 110 one-parent-family households and 45 multigenerational households. The pattern suggests a household structure anchored in family living, with a growing single-person segment alongside declines in some couple-family types.

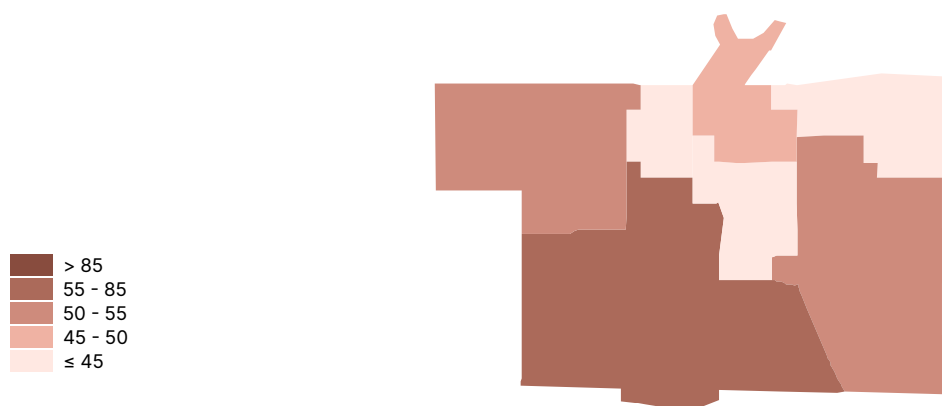


Figure 7.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Household Type - Couple-family households without children (Cardston)¹

Average Shelter Costs

In Cardston, average monthly shelter costs were higher for owners than renters in 2021, at \$1,164 versus \$1,040. Over five years, owner costs rose 19.3% and renter costs 27.1%.

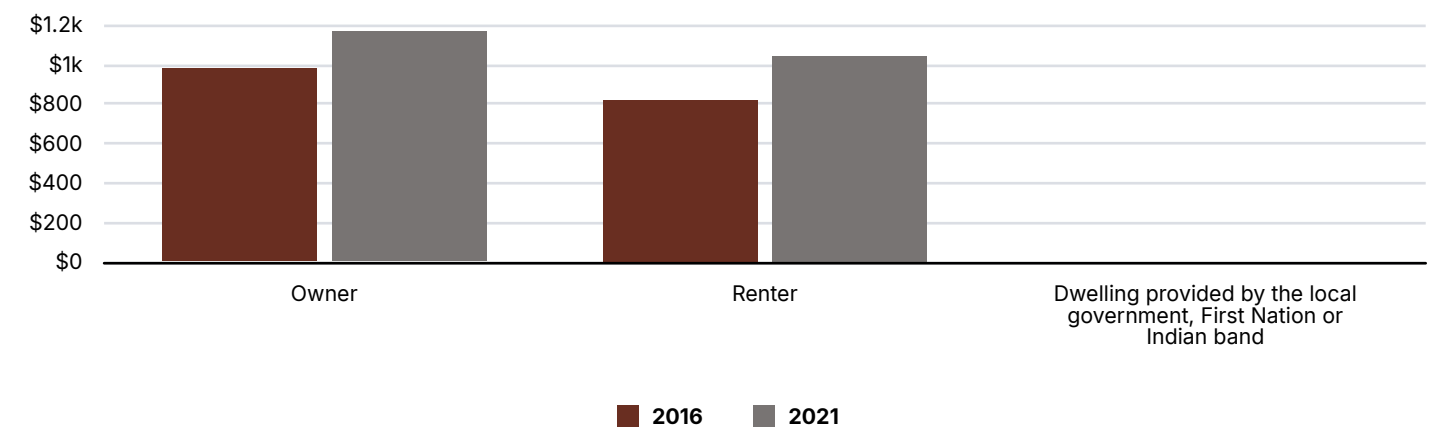


Figure 8.1: Shows the average monthly shelter costs paid by households. It helps indicate typical housing expenses faced by owners and renters. (Cardston, 2016-2021)¹

Cardston’s average monthly shelter costs in 2021 were higher for owners than for renters, with owners paying \$1,164 and renters \$1,040. The gap was modest, but both figures point to noticeable housing expenses for households in private dwellings. The five-year change shows upward movement in both tenure groups. Owner costs rose 19.3%, while renter costs increased 27.1%, suggesting faster growth among renters over the period. Housing provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band was reported at \$0.

In Cardston, average monthly shelter costs in 2021 were \$1,164 for owner households and \$1,040 for renters, with both tenure groups reporting higher costs than five years earlier. Owner costs rose 19.3 percent, while renter costs increased 27.1 percent. The local government, First Nation or Indian band category was recorded at \$0. Across the dissemination areas, owner costs ranged from \$900 to \$1,540, while renter costs ran from \$900 to \$1,200, showing noticeable variation within the subdivision.

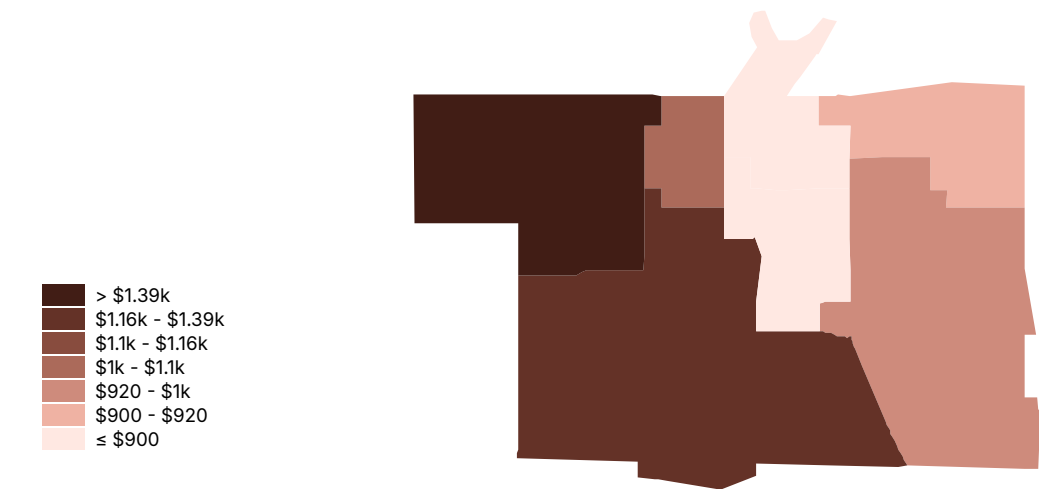


Figure 8.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Housing Tenure - Owner (Cardston)¹

Housing Tenure

In Cardston, owner households remained the largest group at 930 in 2021, down 3.6% from 2016. Renter households increased to 330, up 61.0%, while government-provided dwellings stayed at zero.

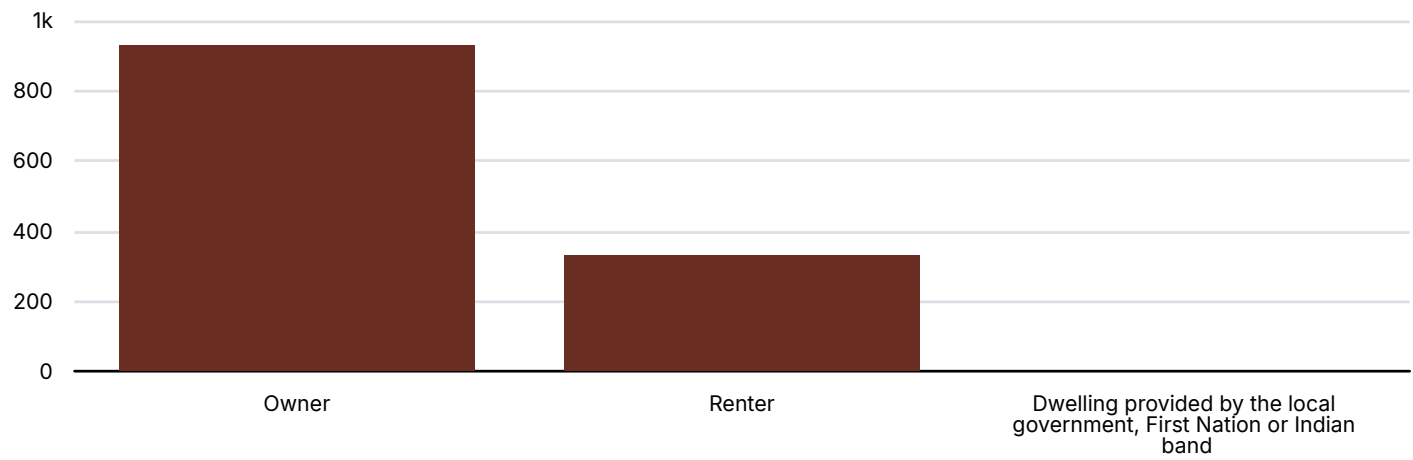
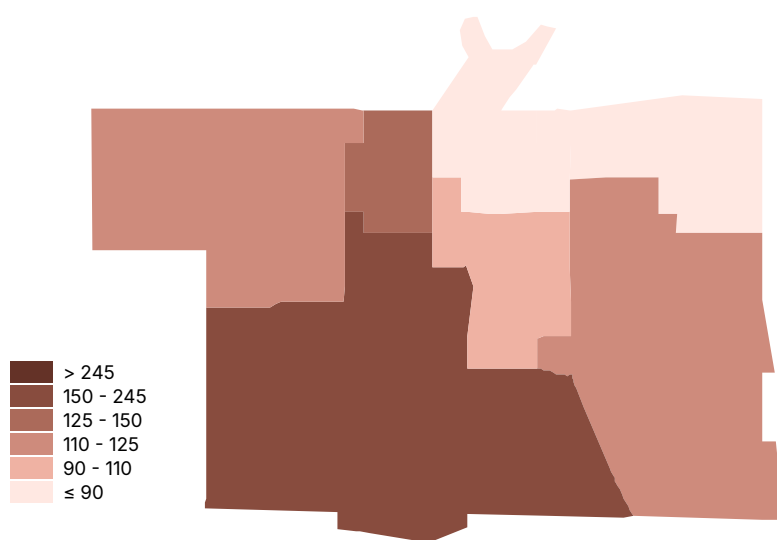


Figure 9.1: Shows whether households own or rent their homes. It helps indicate the balance between ownership and rental housing in the community. (Cardston, 2021)¹

In 2021, Cardston's housing tenure was still dominated by ownership, with 930 owner households and 330 renter households among private households. The owner count was down 3.6% over five years, while renter households rose 61.0% over the same period. No households were reported as living in dwellings provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band. That mix shows a community where ownership remained the main tenure, but renting grew much faster than owning. The five-year changes point to a modest shift in balance, even though owners still far outnumbered renters.



In 2021, Cardston's housing tenure was dominated by ownership, with 930 owner households and 330 renter households among private households. Owner households still outnumbered renters by nearly three to one. Over five years, ownership edged down 3.6%, while renting rose 61.0%. No households were recorded in dwellings provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band. The pattern points to a tenure mix that remains owner-heavy, but with noticeable recent growth in renting alongside a modest decline in ownership.

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

Household Total Income Groups

Cardston's largest household income group was \$150,000 to \$199,999 at 120 households in 2021, up 41.2% from 2016. The \$200,000 and over group rose faster, increasing 85.7% to 65 households.

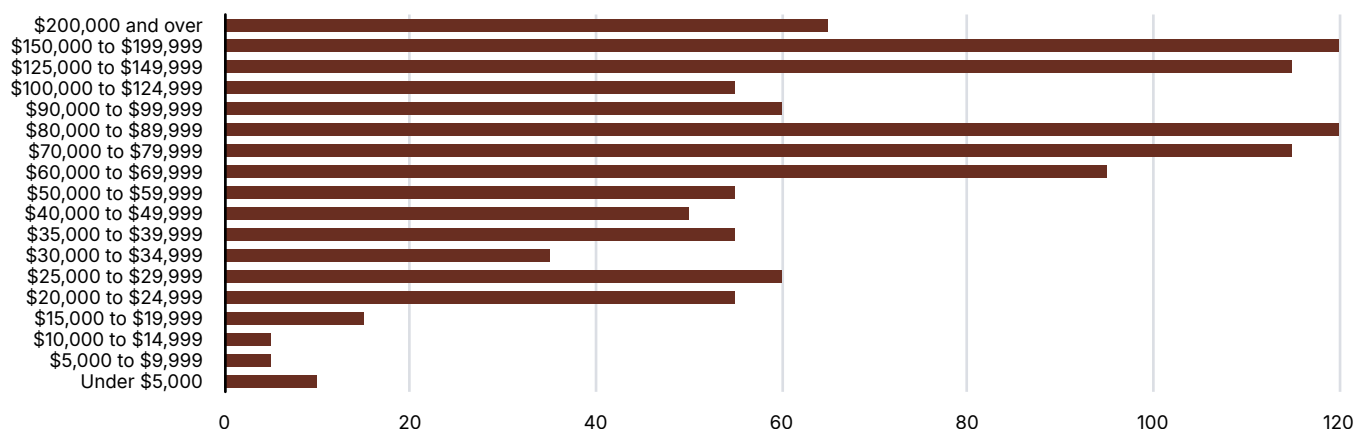


Figure 10.1: Shows households across total income groups. It helps indicate how household incomes are distributed from lower- to higher-income ranges. (Cardston, 2021)¹

Cardston's household income profile in 2021 was spread across many bands, but the clearest recent movement was at the higher end of the distribution. The largest counts were in the \$80,000 to \$89,999 and \$150,000 to \$199,999 groups, each with 120 households. The \$70,000 to \$79,999 and \$125,000 to \$149,999 bands each had 115 households. Over five years, several middle and upper-middle ranges grew, including \$80,000 to \$89,999, up 71.4%, \$150,000 to \$199,999, up 41.2%, and \$200,000 and over, up 85.7%. By contrast, some lower-income groups fell sharply, such as \$15,000 to \$19,999, down 66.7%, and \$5,000 to \$9,999, down 50.0%. The pattern suggests a shift toward stronger representation in higher income brackets, while some lower brackets became smaller.

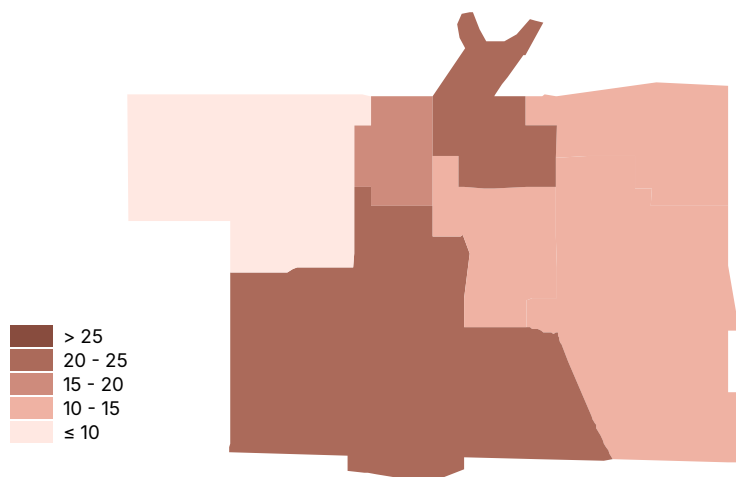


Figure 10.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Income Group Household - \$80,000 to \$89,999 (Cardston)¹

In 2021, Cardston's private households were spread across a broad income range, but the largest counts were concentrated in the middle and upper-middle brackets. The biggest groups were \$80,000 to \$89,999 and \$150,000 to \$199,999, both at 120 households, followed by \$70,000 to \$79,999 and \$125,000 to \$149,999 at 115 each. Lower-income brackets were smaller, while several higher-income groups posted strong five-year gains, including \$200,000 and over at 65 households, up 85.7%. The pattern suggests a distribution tilted toward middle and higher incomes rather than the lowest brackets.

High School Completion

Cardston’s largest education group in 2021 was residents with a high school diploma or equivalent, at 2,305 people. Those without any certificate, diploma or degree numbered 475, making diploma holders nearly five times as many.

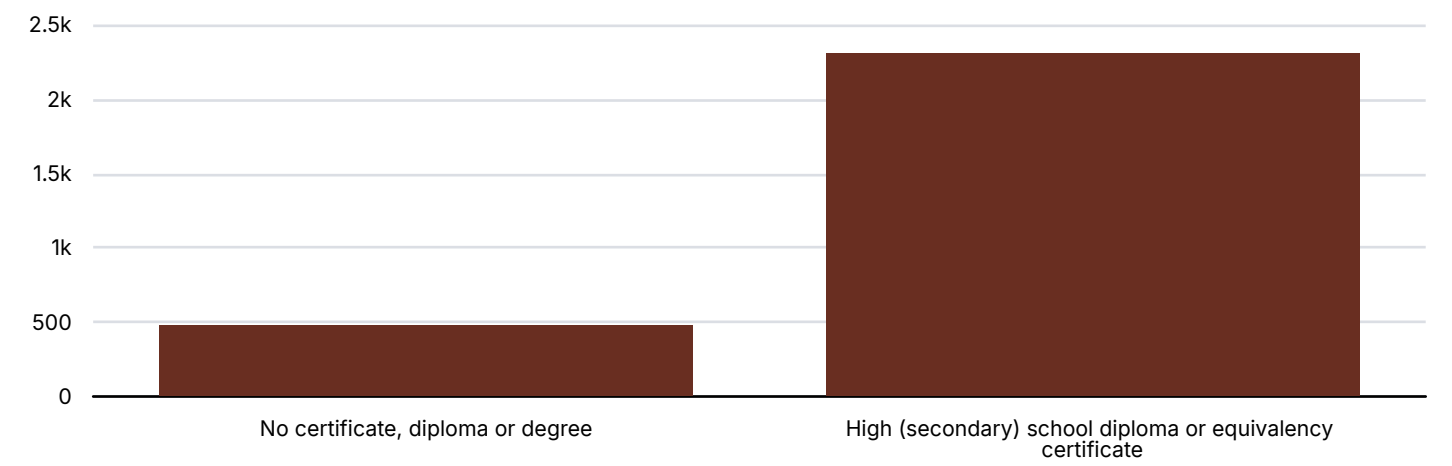


Figure 11.1: Shows whether residents have completed high school or an equivalent credential. It helps indicate a basic foundation for workforce participation and further study. (Cardston, 2021)¹

In 2021, high school completion in Cardston showed a clear majority with completed secondary credentials among residents aged 15 and over living in private households. The census profile records 2,305 people with a high school diploma or equivalent, compared with 475 people with no certificate, diploma or degree. This profile suggests that completed high school is the more common educational outcome in the community. With only these two categories provided, the data points to a distribution that is weighted toward basic secondary attainment, while a smaller group remains without formal credentials.



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

Core Housing Need

In Cardston, 1,205 households were not in core housing need in 2021, compared with 30 households in core need. That left 97.6% outside core need and 2.4% inside it.

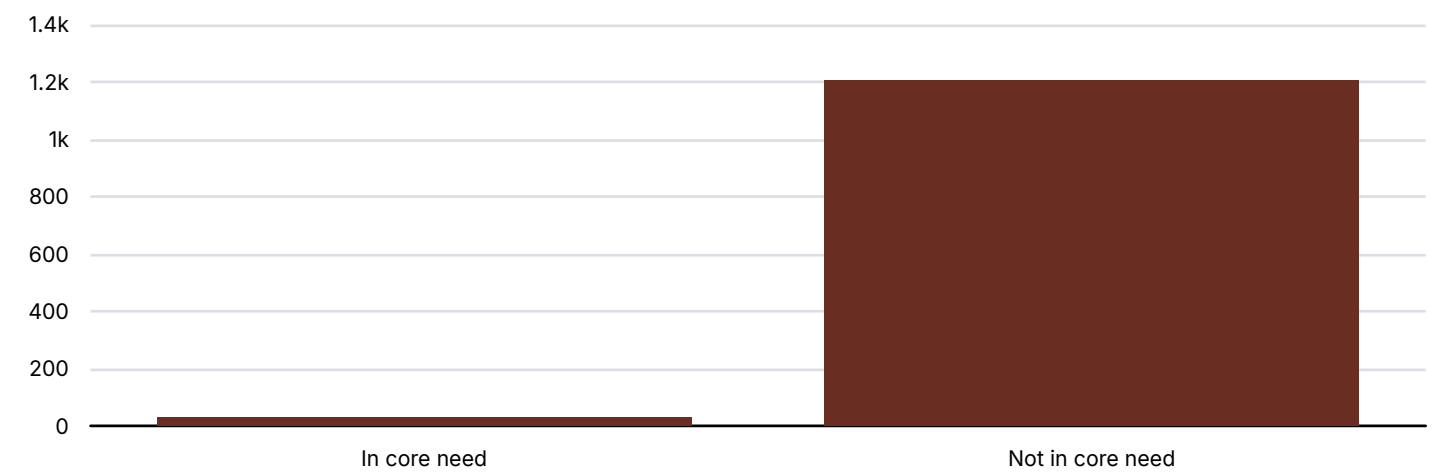
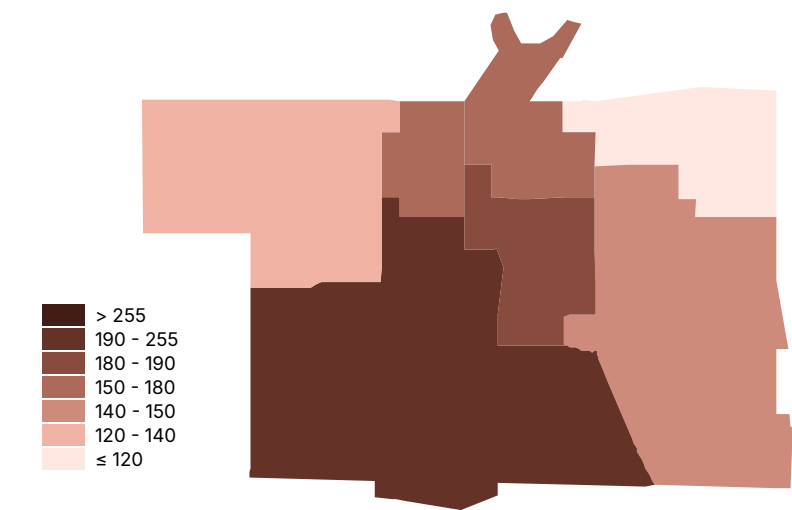


Figure 12.1: Shows the share of households living in housing that is unaffordable, unsuitable, or in need of major repairs. It helps indicate overall housing stress in the community. (Cardston, 2021)¹

Cardston's 2021 core housing need data show a small share of households experiencing housing stress within the measured universe. The town recorded 30 households in core housing need, compared with 1,205 households not in core housing need. That means most households in the Census Subdivision were outside core housing need in 2021, but the data provide only a single year, so no time trend can be assessed from this dataset. The figures describe households with income above zero in non-farm, non-reserve private dwellings, under Statistics Canada's Census Profile definition. With no earlier or later year included, the main takeaway is a one-point snapshot of housing conditions rather than a trend.



In 2021, Cardston had 30 households in core housing need, alongside 1,205 households not in core need. That places the share of households facing housing stress at about 2.4% within the measured universe. Across the listed dissemination areas, each shows zero households in core need. The pattern points to limited housing stress in this dataset, with no local pocket standing out.

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

Median Age

Cardston’s median age was 40.8 years in 2021, down 1.2% from 2016’s 41.3 years. Even so, it remained above 2011’s 38.4 years, showing a higher midpoint age over the decade.

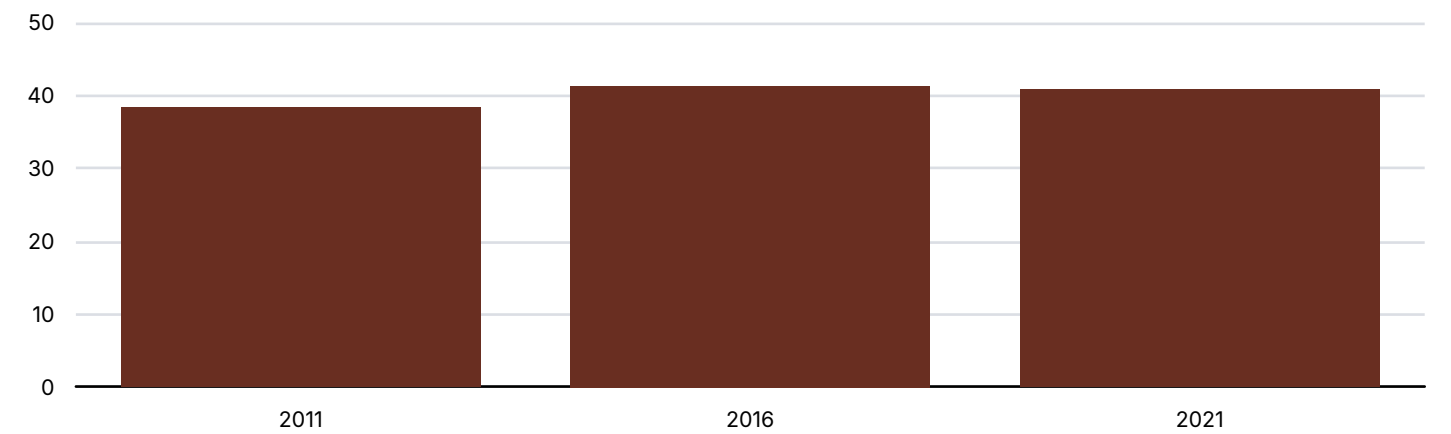


Figure 13.1: Shows the median age of residents. It helps indicate whether the population skews younger or older at the midpoint of the age distribution. (Cardston, 2011-2021)¹

Cardston’s median age points to a population that sits well above the national young-adult midpoint, and its recent trend has been fairly stable. The median age was 38.4 years in 2011, rose to 41.3 in 2016, and then edged down to 40.8 in 2021. That 5-year change of -1.2 percent suggests a small recent easing after the earlier increase. The profile indicates modest aging, but not a sharp shift.

Cardston’s median age was 40.8 years in 2021, placing it below several nearby municipalities but above Cardston County’s 36.4 years. The town’s median age rose from 38.4 in 2011 to 41.3 in 2016, then eased slightly over the next five years. Compared with Hill Spring at 54.8 years, Nanton at 52.8, and Pincher Creek at 45.2, Cardston sits in the middle of the regional range. The pattern suggests a relatively mature population, though not the oldest in the area.

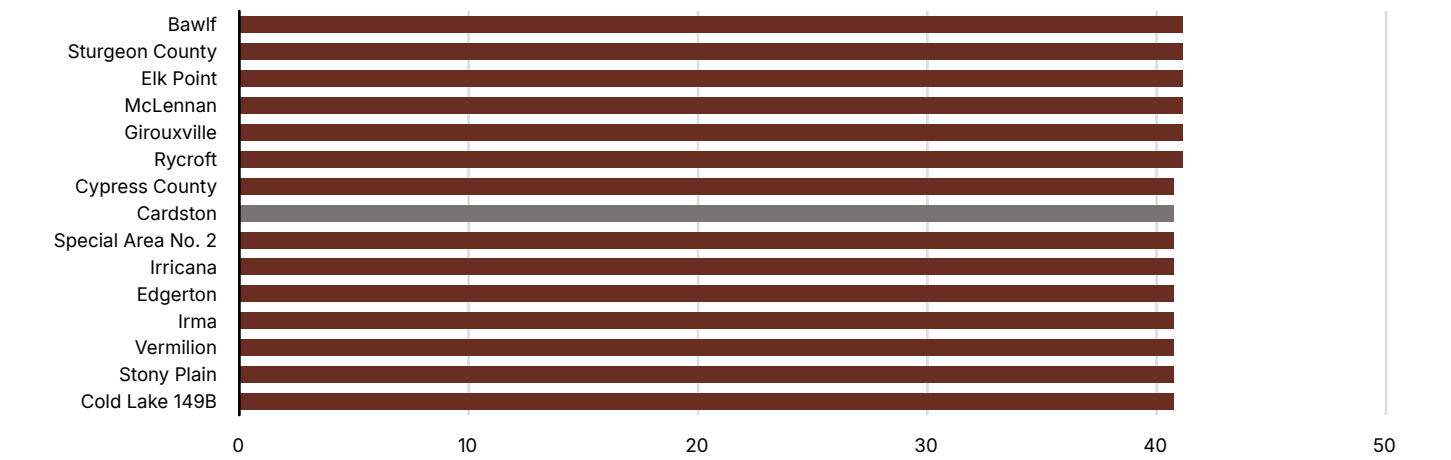


Figure 13.2: Comparison of Median Age with other locations (Cardston, 2021)¹

Age at Immigration

In Cardston, immigrants most often arrived at ages 25 to 44, with 115 people in 2021, while the 5 to 14 group rose to 75, up 200% since 2016.

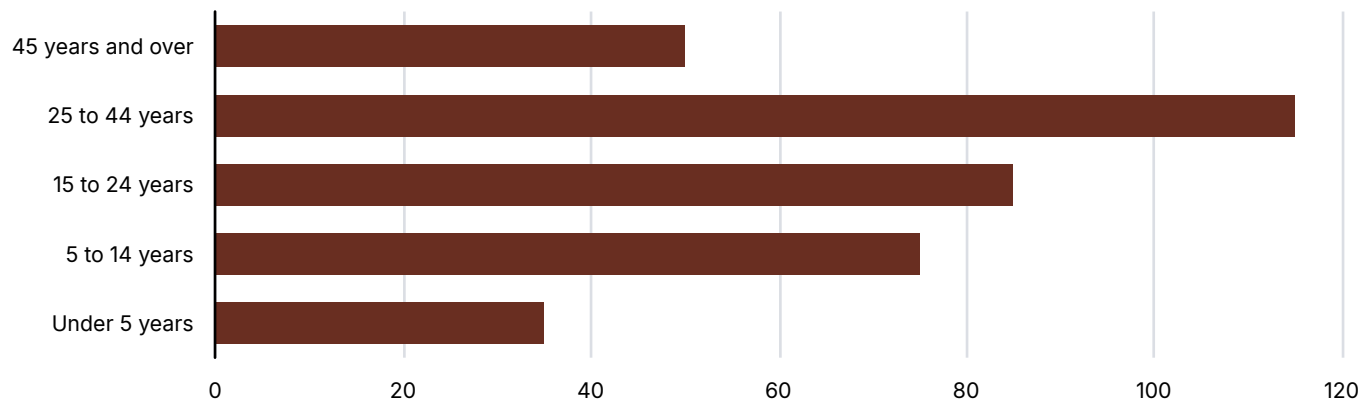


Figure 14.1: Shows the age at which immigrants first arrived in the country. It helps explain whether newcomers arrived mainly as children, working-age adults, or older adults. (Cardston, 2021)¹

In Cardston, the 2021 immigrant population in private households was spread across arrival ages, with the largest group arriving at 25 to 44 years. That category counted 115 people, followed by 85 who arrived at 15 to 24 years and 75 who arrived at 5 to 14 years. The smaller groups were 50 people who arrived at 45 years and over and 35 who arrived under age 5. Five-year change was mixed, with the strongest increase in the 5 to 14 group, up 200%, while under-5 arrivals fell 12.5% and ages 25 to 44 slipped 8%.

Cardston’s immigrant population in private households is concentrated in working-age arrival years, with the 25 to 44 group the largest at 115 people in 2021. That is followed by 15 to 24 years at 85 and 5 to 14 years at 75. Smaller numbers arrived under age 5, at 35, and at 45 years and over, at 50. The 5-year change was strongest for arrivals at 5 to 14 years, up 200%, while 25 to 44 years slipped 8%. This pattern suggests Cardston has seen a mix of child and adult arrivals, with recent gains centered on younger immigrants.

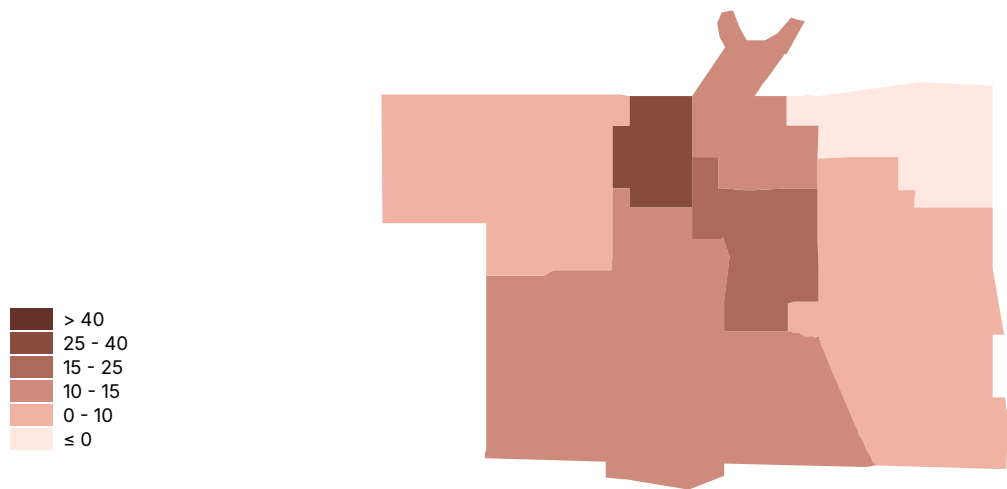


Figure 14.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Age At Immigration - 25 to 44 years (Cardston)¹

Immigrant Status

Non-immigrants remained the largest group in Cardston in 2021 at 3,225 people, up 4.0% from 2016. Immigrants rose to 350, while non-permanent residents fell to zero from 15.

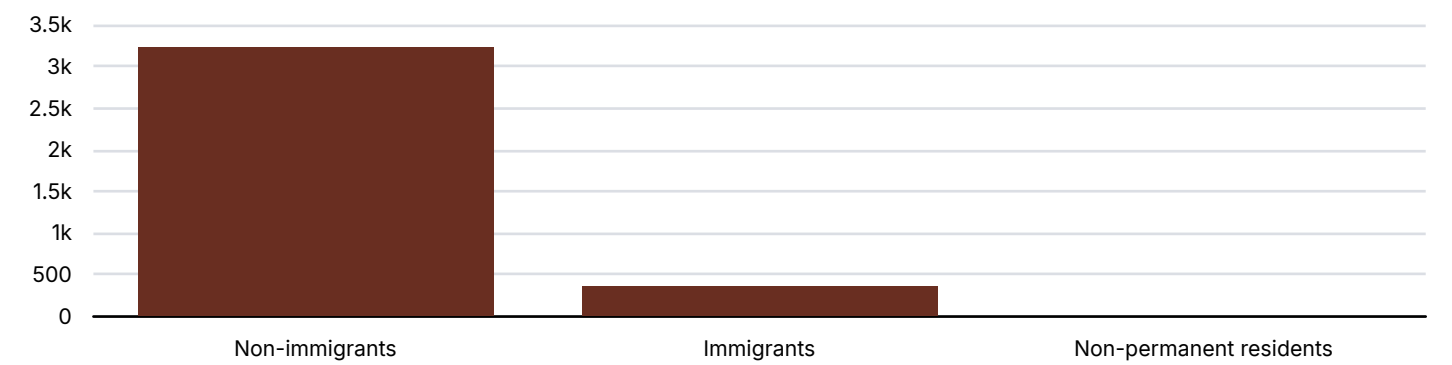


Figure 15.1: Shows whether residents are immigrants, non-permanent residents, or non-immigrants. It helps indicate the role of immigration in community growth and composition. (Cardston, 2021)¹

In 2021, Cardston’s population in private households was dominated by non-immigrants, with 3,225 people in that category. Immigrants numbered 350, while non-permanent residents were recorded at zero. The 5-year changes point to some movement in the community’s composition: non-immigrants rose 4.0% and immigrants increased 25.0%, while non-permanent residents fell 100.0% from a small base. The pattern suggests a largely stable population structure with some recent growth in immigrant residents, but no non-permanent resident presence at the time of the census.

Cardston’s immigrant status profile in 2021 was dominated by non-immigrants, with immigration playing a smaller but present role in the population in private households. The town counted 3,225 non-immigrants, 350 immigrants, and no non-permanent residents. Over five years, non-immigrants rose 4.0%, while immigrants increased 25.0%. Among the nearby dissemination areas shown, immigrant counts ranged from 15 to 90, and all reported zero non-permanent residents. Cardston’s 350 immigrants is larger than any of those local areas. The pattern suggests a largely settled community, with modest immigrant growth but no sign of a non-permanent resident presence in the reported data.

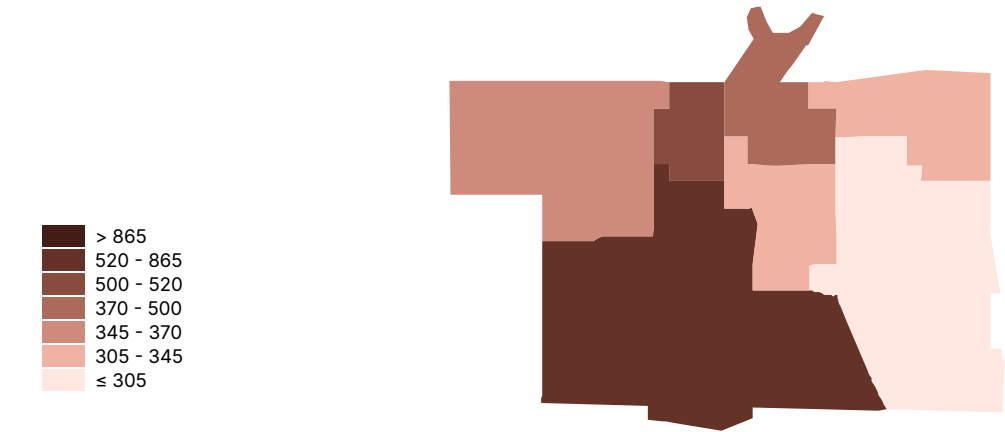


Figure 15.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Immigrant Status - Non-immigrants (Cardston)¹

Data Sources

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

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