



NANTON

Accommodation and Food Services

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Executive Summary

Nanton's accommodation and food services sector presents a mixed picture of expansion in business presence alongside contraction in employment. The local resident labour force participating in the sector grew strongly between 2016 and 2021, doubling from 30 to 60 people, which points to a larger pool of residents working in these activities. By 2025, however, the sector itself remained small and uneven, with a narrow employment base and a business landscape shaped mainly by very small operators rather than larger employers.

Food service remains the centre of the sector, but it has also been the main source of recent weakness. Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places were still the largest industry in 2025, yet they had fallen sharply over both the past year and the past five years. Traveller accommodation was much smaller and had also declined steeply over the longer term, leaving lodging with a reduced local presence. Against that backdrop, drinking places stood out as the clearest area of momentum. It remained small in absolute size, but it showed strong recent growth and was the only segment to register a notable level of local specialization, with a location quotient of 3.1. Elsewhere, specialization was limited, with restaurants, traveller accommodation, and recreational vehicle parks all below a location quotient of 1.0. Sector employment reflects this uneven structure. After holding in a modest range from 2020 through 2024, total employment dropped to 32 in 2025, making it the low point in the period shown.

At the same time, the number of accommodation and food services establishments continued to rise, reaching 19 in 2025, the highest count in the recent series. That growth was concentrated in microbusinesses, including establishments with no employees and those with only one to four employees, reinforcing the sector's small-scale character. Nanton's labour market gap ratio of 0.9 in 2021 suggests the relationship between resident workers and local jobs was close to balance. The broader picture is of a sector with increasing business count and earlier growth in resident participation, but with recent employment losses, weaker restaurant and lodging activity, and a growing concentration in a narrow set of very small businesses.

Resident Labour Force in Sector

Nanton's resident labour force in this sector doubled to 60 people in 2021 from 30 in 2016, a 100.0% increase over five years.

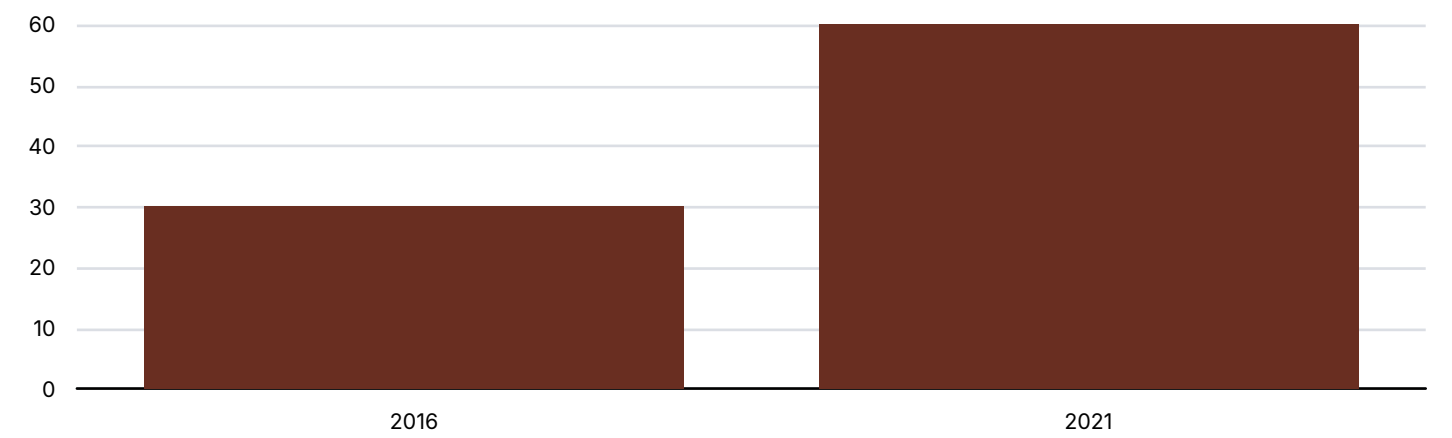


Figure 1.1: Shows the number of resident workers in a specific sector. It helps indicate how many local residents are employed in that part of the economy. (Nanton, 2016-2021)¹

In Nanton, the resident labour force in accommodation and food services doubled between 2016 and 2021. The number rose from 30 people to 60 people, a 100.0% increase over the five-year period. Measured within the labour force aged 15 years and over, this sector remained a relatively small part of local employment, but the change suggests a clear upward shift in resident participation. With only two points available, the main story is steady growth rather than a broader long-term pattern.

In accommodation and food services, Nanton had 60 resident workers in 2021, up from 30 in 2016. That 100% increase points to a larger local labour force in this sector over the five-year period. Among the listed comparables, Nanton sat below Claresholm at 135, Pincher Creek at 145, and Cardston at 115, but above several places with 0 to 25 workers. The pattern suggests moderate scale with notable recent growth. For 2021, Nanton stood in the middle of the group rather than at the top.

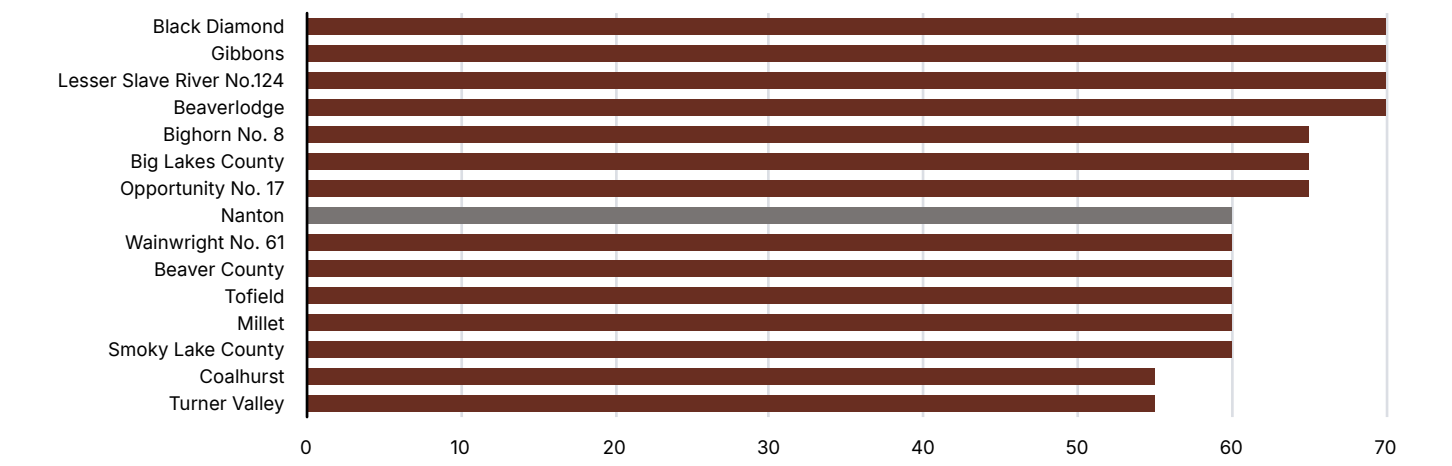


Figure 1.2: Comparison of Resident Labour Force in Sector with other locations (Nanton, 2021)¹

Largest Industries in Sector

Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places led Nanton's sector in 2025 with 24 people, down 35.1% from a year earlier and 40.0% over five years. Drinking places rose to 5 people.

In 2025, Nanton's accommodation and food services sector was led by full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places, which employed 24 people. Drinking places followed with 5 workers, while traveller accommodation accounted for 2 and recreational vehicle parks and recreational camps for 1. Within this sector, the employment base is concentrated in food service rather than lodging. The time trend is mixed. Restaurant employment fell 35.1% over the past year and 40% over five years. Traveller accommodation was flat over the past year

but down 81.8% over five years. Drinking places increased sharply from the previous year, rising 400%, though no five-year change is shown. RV parks and recreational camps had no reported change values. This pattern suggests a small sector with one dominant industry and several much smaller components. The largest category remains far ahead of the others even after recent declines. For Nanton, the sector's employment profile in 2025 is narrow, and the longer-term shifts point to a smaller lodging presence than five years ago.

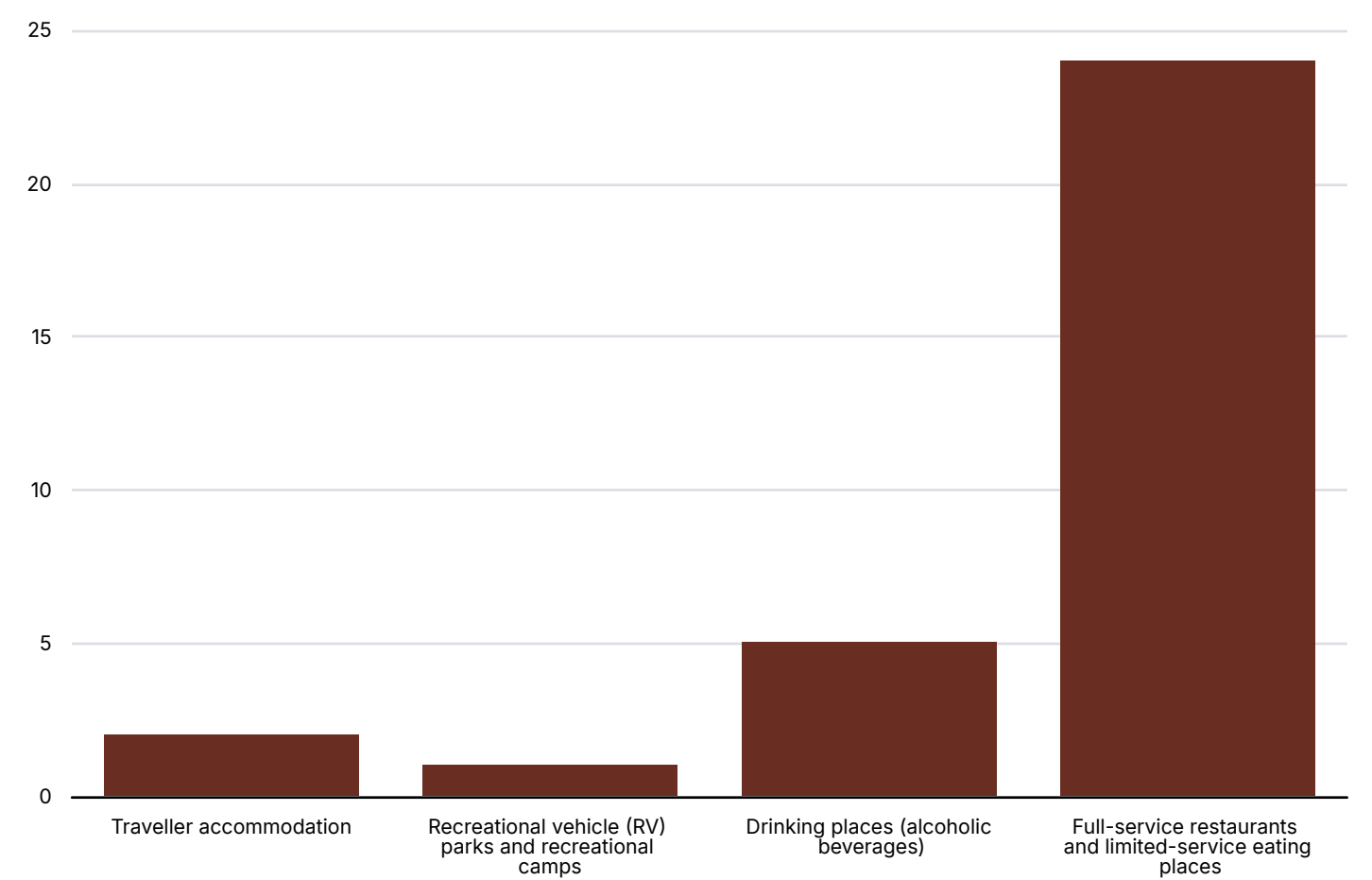


Figure 2.1: Shows the industries within this sector with the highest employment. It helps identify the biggest components of the sector. (Nanton, 2025)²

Declining Industries in Sector

Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places remained the largest declining industry in Nanton at 24 people, down 35.1% from a year earlier and 40.0% over five years. Drinking places grew to 5 people, up 400.0%.

In Nanton’s accommodation and food services sector, employment has shifted unevenly across industries in 2025. The clearest decline appears in full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places, which employed 24 people and fell 35.1% over the past year and 40.0% over five years. Traveller accommodation was much smaller at 2 jobs, but it also shows a steep five-year drop of 81.8%, despite no change over the past year. Other parts of the sector are either very small or moving in the

opposite direction. Recreational vehicle parks and recreational camps accounted for 1 job, with no change reported. Drinking places employed 5 people and increased sharply over the past year, up 400.0%, although a longer-term trend is not available. The pattern suggests that the sector’s recent contraction is concentrated in food service and lodging rather than spread evenly across all activities. In a small local employment base, even modest changes can noticeably alter the sector’s mix.

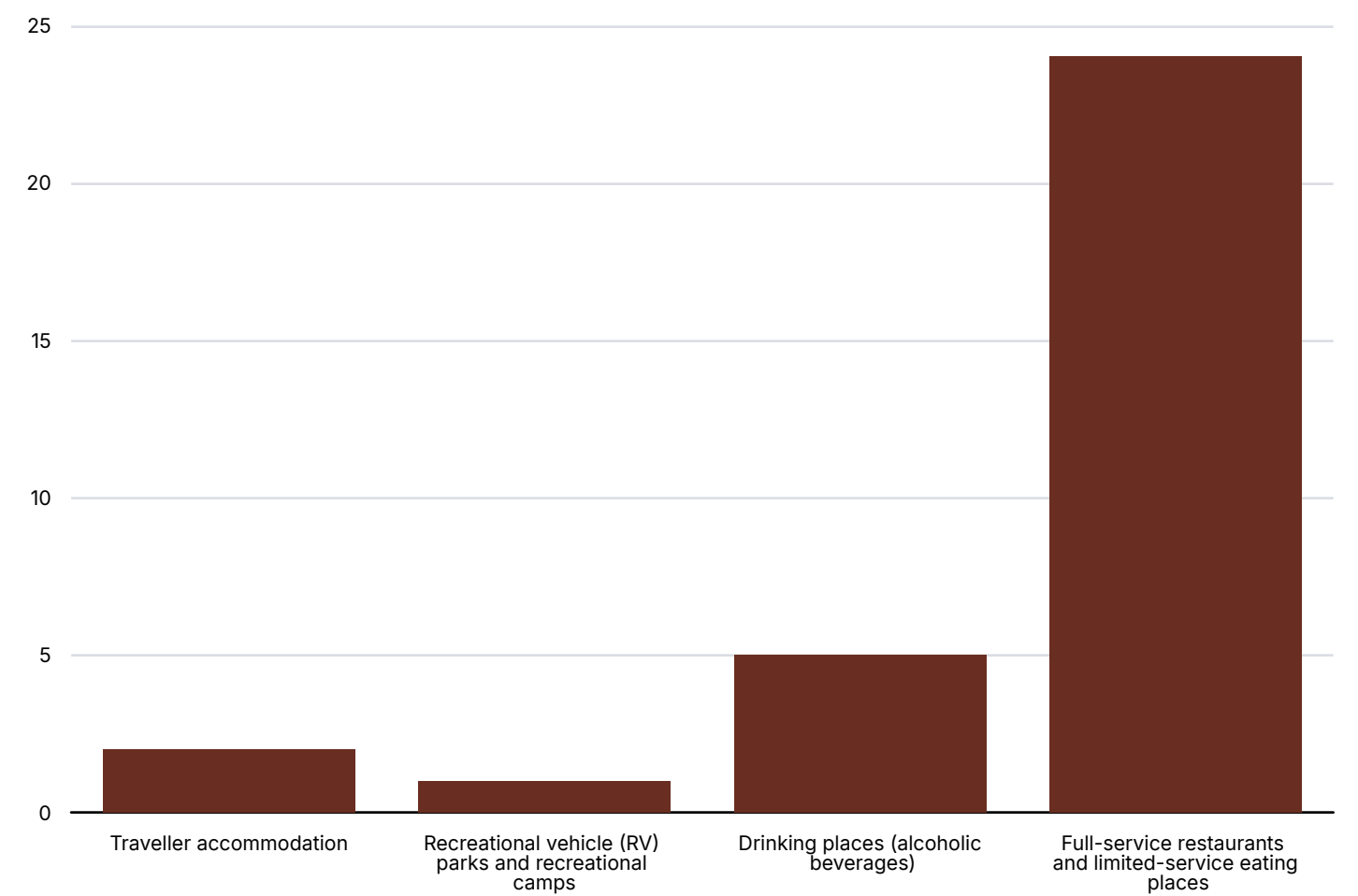


Figure 3.1: Shows industries within this sector where employment has decreased the most over the selected time period. It helps identify segments of the sector that are losing jobs. (Nanton, 2025)²

Establishments in Sector

Nanton had 19 business establishments in 2025, up 11.8% from 2024 and 46.2% from 2020. The count rose from 13 in 2018, with brief declines in 2020 and 2023.

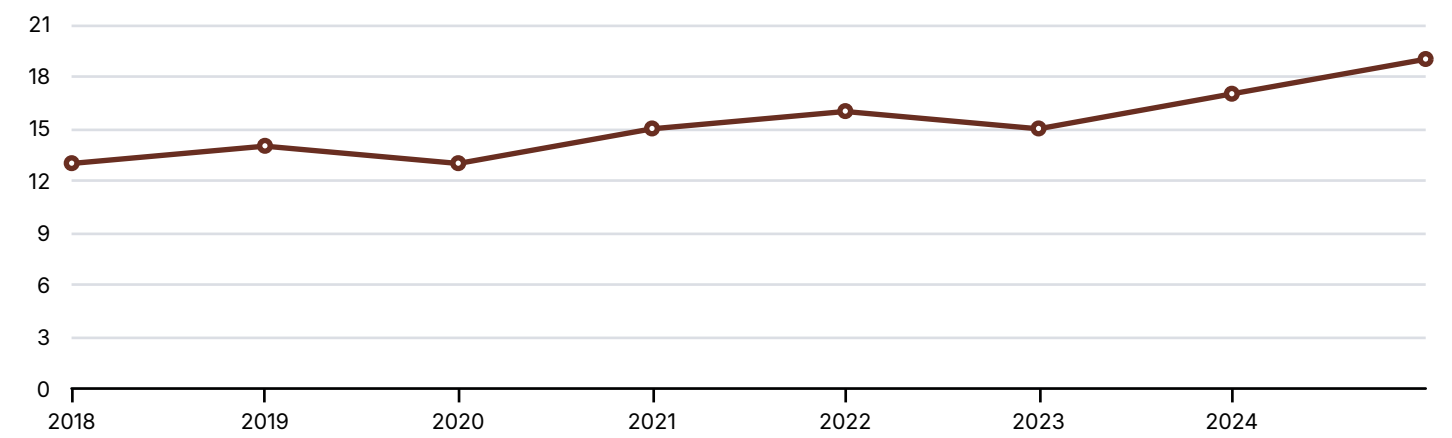


Figure 4.1: Shows the number of business establishments in a specific sector. It helps indicate the scale of business activity in that sector. (Nanton, 2018-2025)³

Nanton's accommodation and food services sector had 19 business establishments in 2025, the highest count in the period shown. The series moved from 13 in 2018 to 14 in 2019, dipped back to 13 in 2020, then rose to 15 in 2021 and 16 in 2022. After a small decline to 15 in 2023, the count increased to 17 in 2024 and 19 in 2025. That pattern shows a modest but steady upward trend, with the strongest gains appearing in the most recent years.

Nanton had 19 accommodation and food services establishments in 2025, the highest count in its recent series. The number rose from 13 in 2018, dipped to 13 again in 2020, and then recovered steadily, including gains of 13.3% in 2024 and 11.8% in 2025. Over five years, the total increase reached 46.1%. Among the nearby places shown, only Pincher Creek had more establishments, with 43 in 2025. Nanton's pattern points to moderate but sustained sector expansion.

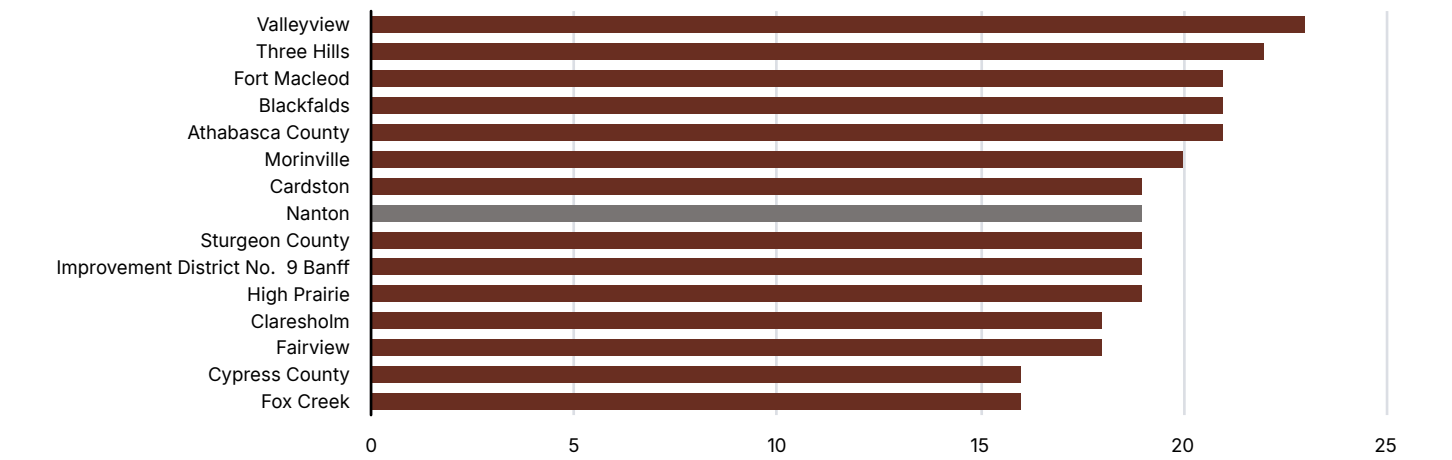


Figure 4.2: Comparison of Establishments in Sector with other locations (Nanton, 2025)³

Specialist Industries in Sector

Nanton’s most specialized sector is drinking places, with a location quotient of 3.1 and a 406.2% one-year increase. Traveller accommodation ranks lower at 0.2, while restaurants and RV parks remain below 1.0.

Nanton's specialist industries in accommodation and food services are concentrated in a few narrow niches rather than spread evenly across the sector. In 2025, drinking places stood out most clearly, with a location quotient of 3.1, while recreational vehicle parks and recreational camps measured 0.7, full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places 0.4, and traveller accommodation 0.2. The strongest recent change was in drinking places, which posted a 1-year increase of 406.2 per-

cent. By contrast, traveller accommodation fell 5.8 percent over the same period and was down 84.0 percent over five years. Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places also declined, with a 39.1 percent 1-year drop and a 43.2 percent five-year decrease. The pattern suggests that local specialization is increasingly concentrated in one segment, while several other parts of the sector have weakened or remained less specialized.

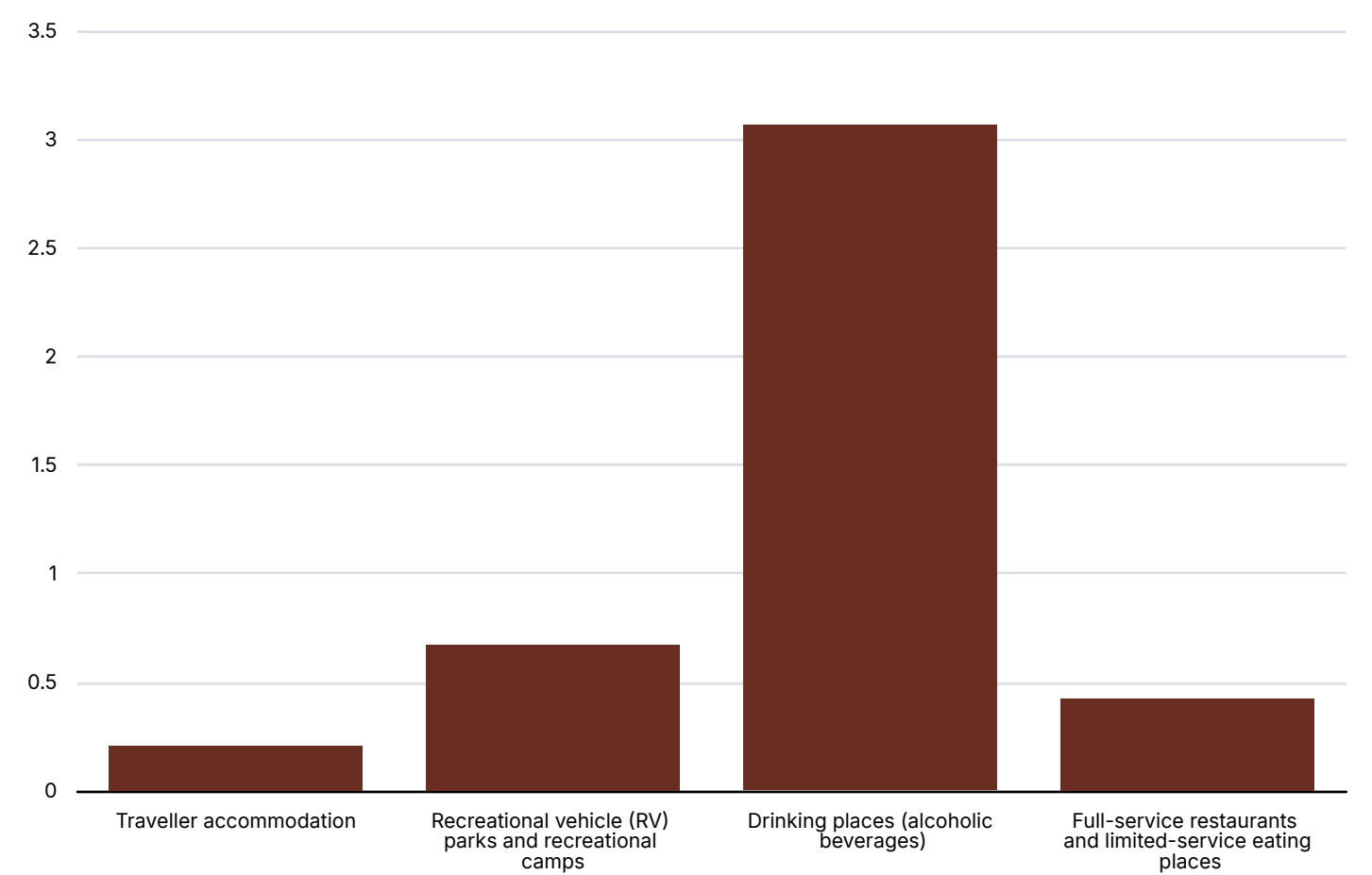


Figure 5.1: Shows industries within this sector where the local economy has the highest level of specialization based on employment concentration. Industries are categorized based on specialization (location quotient) and recent employment growth or change in concentration. (Nanton, 2025)⁴

Transitioning Industries in Sector

In Nanton, full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places are the largest transitioning industry at a 0.4222 location quotient. The category fell 39.1% in one year and 43.2% over five years, while traveller accommodation stood at 0.2075.

In Nanton's accommodation and food services sector, the industries with the weakest local specialization are also showing softer concentration over time. In 2025, traveller accommodation had a location quotient of 0.2, with employment down 5.8% over one year and 84.0% over five years. Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places stood at 0.4, with a 39.1% decline over one year and a 43.2% decline over five years. The pattern is one of limited specialization rather than a strong local cluster. Both industries remain below a location

quotient of 1.0, which means their presence in Nanton is smaller than would be expected relative to the broader benchmark used for comparison. The short-term and longer-term changes point in the same direction, though the pace differs. Traveller accommodation shows the sharper five-year contraction, while restaurants have a more moderate long-term decline but a steep recent drop. Taken together, the data suggest these are transitional parts of the sector rather than anchors of local employment.

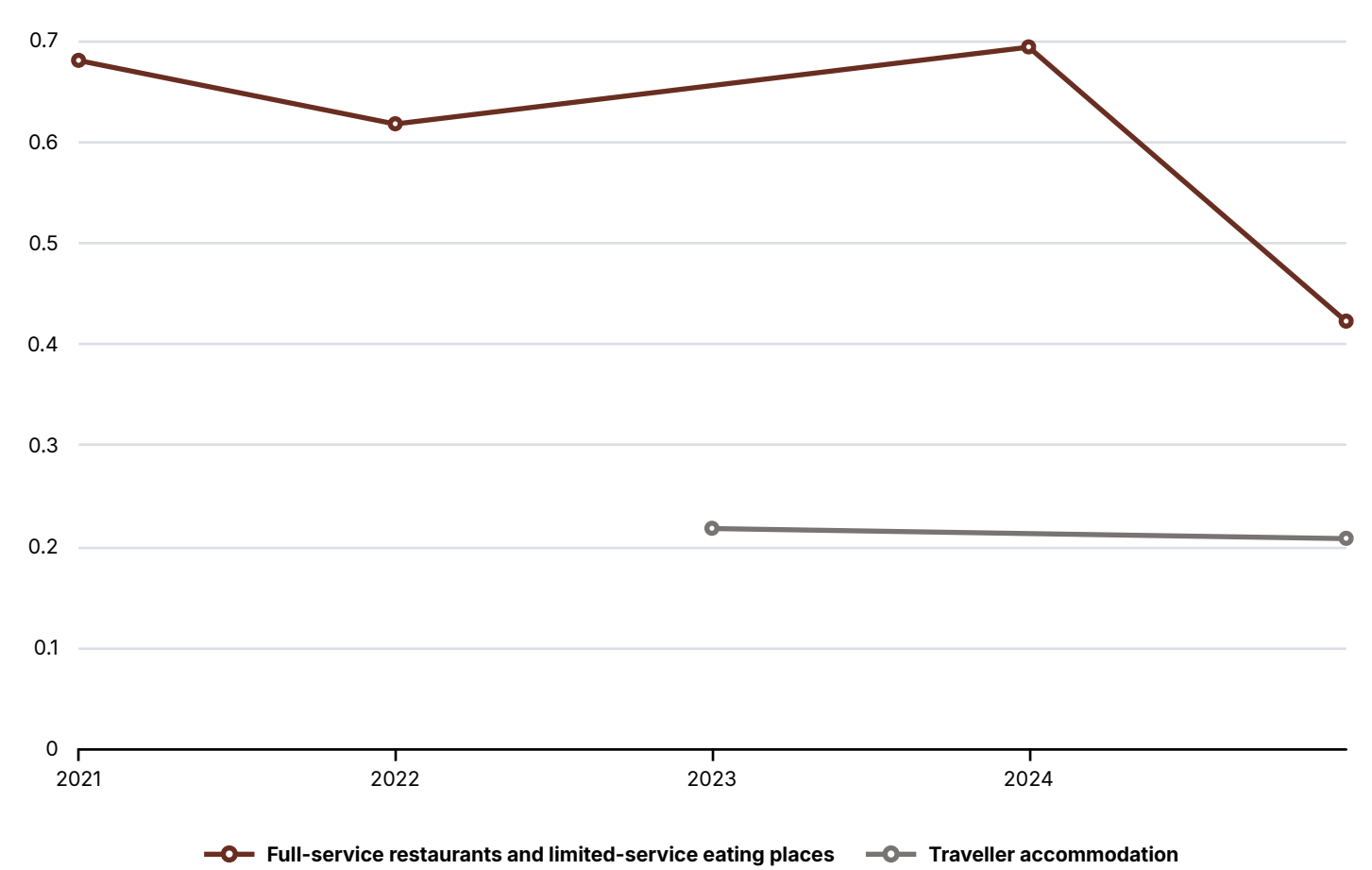


Figure 6.1: Shows industries within this sector that have relatively low specialization in the local economy and limited or declining concentration. Industries are categorized based on specialization (location quotient) and recent employment growth or change in concentration. (Nanton, 2021-2025)⁴

Emerging Industries in Sector

In Nanton, drinking places had the highest 2024 location quotient among emerging industries at 0.6053, up 4.4% from a year earlier. Traveller accommodation followed at 0.2202, while restaurants led 2023 growth at 26.5%.

In Nanton’s accommodation and food services sector, the emerging industries are still lightly specialized, but both show recent gains in concentration. The clearest examples are traveller accommodation and drinking places, which stand out more for growth than for current size. Traveller accommodation has a location quotient of 0.22 and a 1-year change of 1.3. Drinking places (alcoholic beverages) is higher at 0.61, with a 1-year change of 4.4. Both figures place these industries below a level of strong specialization, yet the recent movement suggests

they are gaining presence in the local economy. The contrast between the two is useful: drinking places is closer to the local average of importance than traveller accommodation, and it is also growing faster over the past year. That makes it the stronger of the two emerging industries in this sector. Taken together, the data point to modest but improving concentration in a narrow part of accommodation and food services, rather than broad sector dominance.

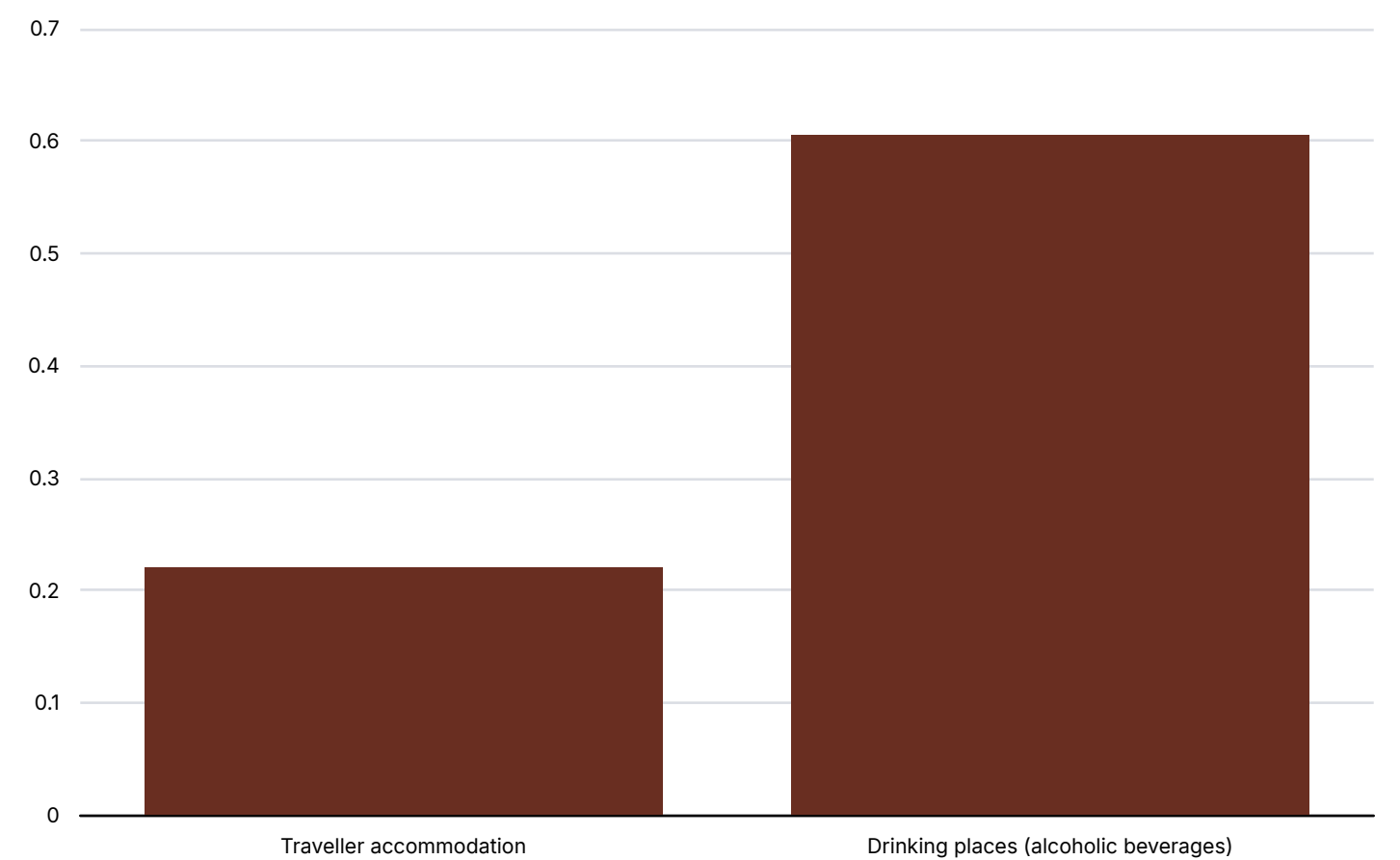


Figure 7.1: Shows industries within this sector that currently have low specialization in the local economy but are experiencing increasing concentration or strong growth. Industries are categorized based on specialization (location quotient) and recent employment growth or change in concentration. (Nanton, 2024)⁴

Employment in Sector

Nanton's total industry employment fell to 32 people in 2025, down 36.0% from 2024 and 37.25% below five years earlier. The series had ranged from 50 to 56 people since 2020.

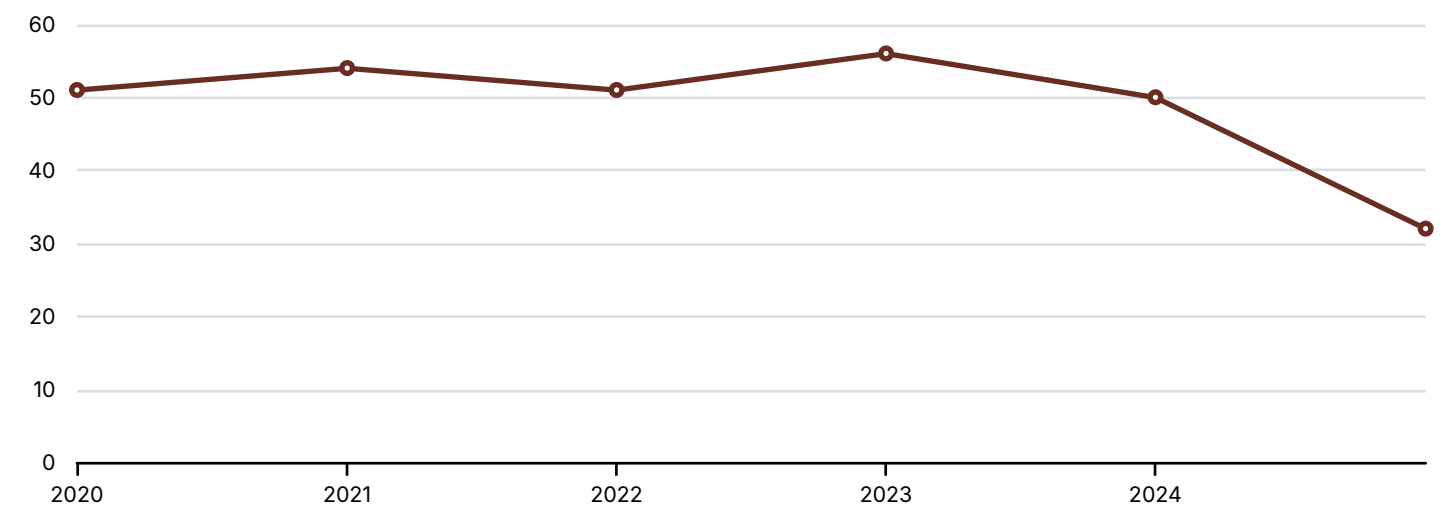
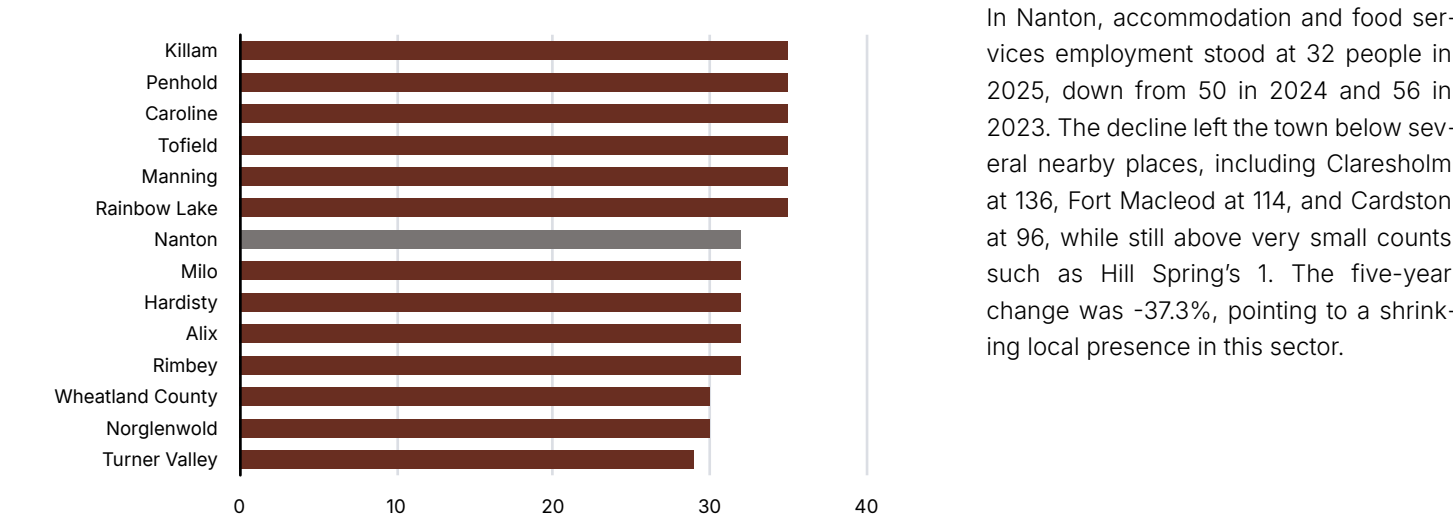


Figure 8.1: Shows the number of jobs in a specific industry sector. It helps indicate the scale of that sector within the local economy. (Nanton, 2020-2025)²

Employment in accommodation and food services in Nanton was small and volatile over the 2020 to 2025 period. The sector had 51 jobs in 2020, rose to 54 in 2021, slipped back to 51 in 2022, and reached 56 in 2023 before easing to 50 in 2024. The sharpest change came in 2025, when employment fell to 32 people, down 36.0% from the year before and 37.3% below 2020. That makes 2025 the clear low point in the series. The pattern suggests a modest, uneven base followed by a pronounced recent decline.



In Nanton, accommodation and food services employment stood at 32 people in 2025, down from 50 in 2024 and 56 in 2023. The decline left the town below several nearby places, including Claresholm at 136, Fort Macleod at 114, and Cardston at 96, while still above very small counts such as Hill Spring's 1. The five-year change was -37.3%, pointing to a shrinking local presence in this sector.

Figure 8.2: Comparison of Employment in Sector with other locations (Nanton, 2025)²

Establishments in Sector by Number of Employees

Nanton’s largest group remained establishments without employees at 8 in 2025, unchanged from 2024 and up 33.3% from 2020. The fastest-growing group was 1 to 4 employees, rising to 7, up 133.3% year over year.

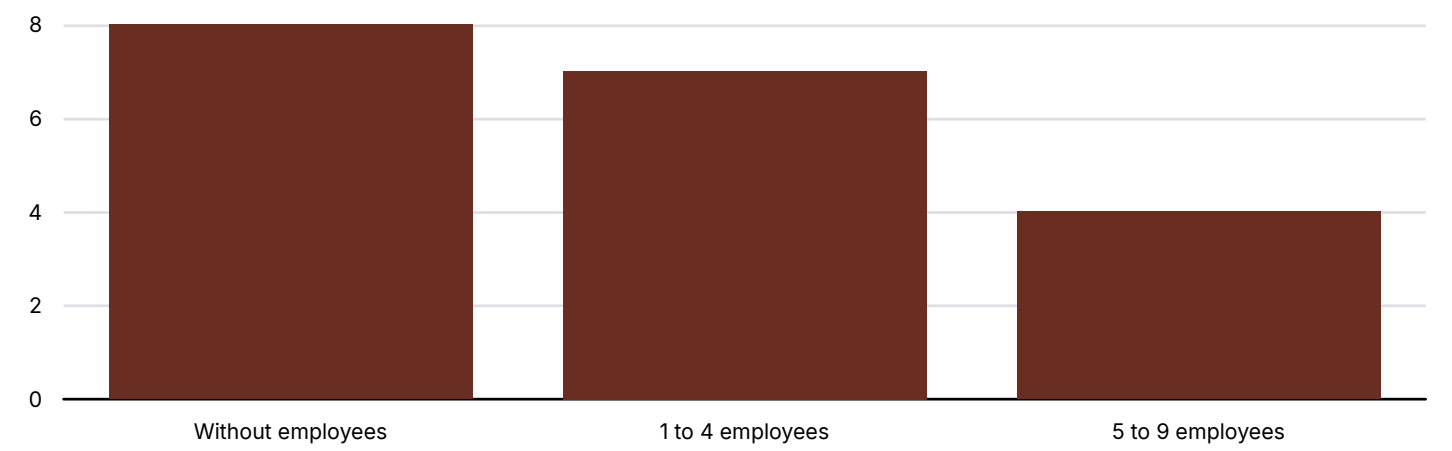
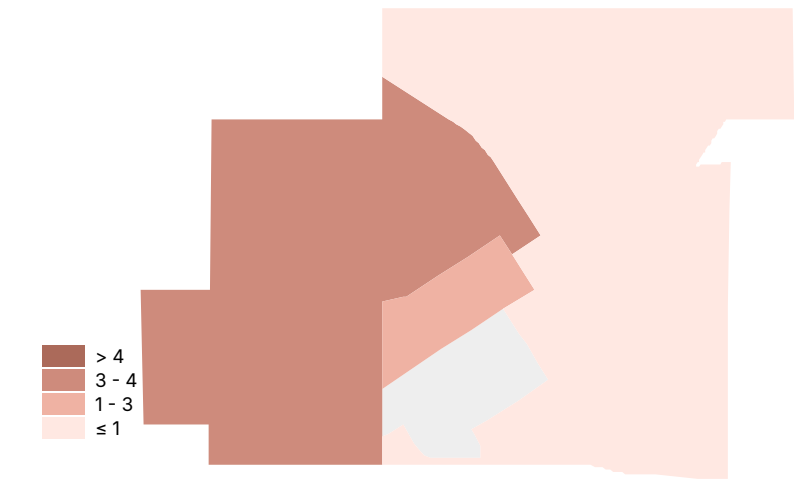


Figure 9.1: Shows the number of business establishments in a sector by employee size class. It helps indicate whether that sector is made up mostly of small or larger firms. (Nanton, 2025)³

In Nanton’s accommodation and food services sector, the establishment mix in 2025 is concentrated in very small firms. There are 8 businesses with no employees, 7 with 1 to 4 employees, and 4 with 5 to 9 employees. The recent pattern is mixed. Establishments without employees were unchanged from a year earlier, while the 1 to 4 employee class rose 133.3%. The 5 to 9 employee group was also flat over the year. Over five years, all three reported size classes expanded: no-employee establishments rose 33.3%, 1 to 4 employee firms increased 250%, and 5 to 9 employee firms grew 300%. The data points to a small-business profile with recent growth in the smallest payroll categories.



In Nanton’s accommodation and food services sector, establishments are concentrated in very small firms. In 2025, there were 8 without employees, 7 with 1 to 4 employees, and 4 with 5 to 9 employees, showing a clear tilt toward microbusinesses. The pattern is also growing at the smallest scales. Establishments without employees were unchanged over one year and up 33.3% over five years, while those with 1 to 4 employees rose 133.3% in the past year and 250% over five years.

Figure 9.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Business Establishment Size - Without employees (Nanton)³

Sector Labour Market Gap

In Nanton, accommodation and food services had a labour market gap ratio of 0.9 in 2021, meaning resident workers slightly exceeded jobs in the sector.

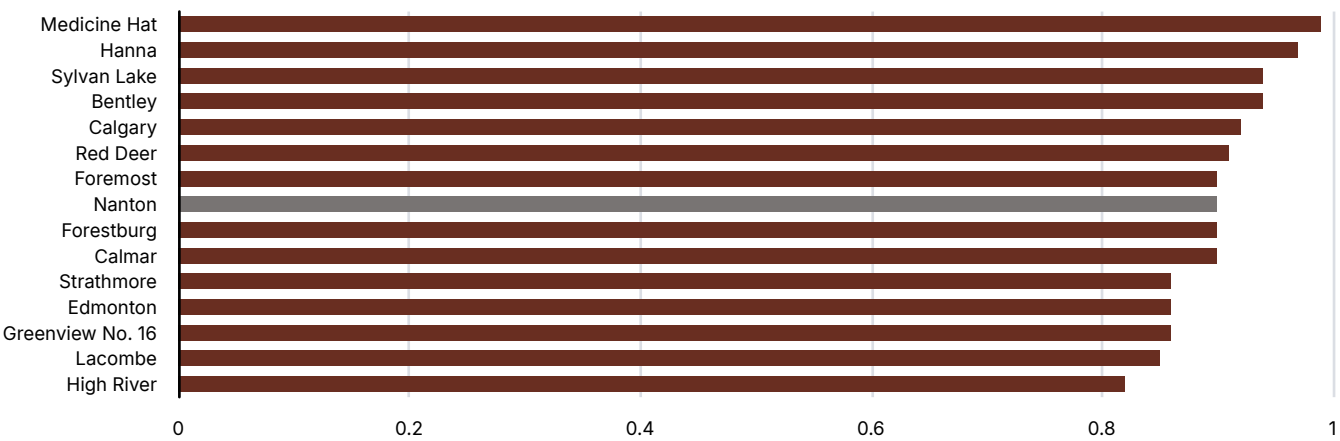


Figure 10.1: Comparison of Sector Labour Market Gap with other locations (Nanton, 2021)⁵

In 2021, Nanton’s labour market gap in accommodation and food services was 0.9, suggesting the number of jobs in this sector was close to the number of resident workers available in the local labour force aged 15 and over. That level sits below nearby Claresholm at 1.4 and Fort Macleod at 1.7, but above Pincher Creek No. 9 at 0.3 and Cardston County at 0.0. Among the places with data, Pincher Creek at 2.2 was the highest. Nanton therefore looks moderately balanced by regional standards, with less gap than some neighbours and more than others.

In Nanton, the accommodation and food services sector shows a labour market gap of 0.9 in 2021, based on the labour force aged 15 years and over. A ratio below 1 suggests slightly fewer resident workers than jobs in this sector. The figure is close to balance rather than a large mismatch. With no additional local detail or benchmark provided, the data supports only a limited reading: this sector may rely modestly on workers from outside the community, or local workers may be spread across other places.



Figure 10.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Industry Sector - Accommodation and food services (Nanton)⁵

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.
3. Statistics Canada, Business Register. Published in Jun 1, 2025.
4. Statistics Canada, Business Register; Localintel, Employment Location Quotient by Industry Estimates of Census Areas. Published in Mar 13, 2026.
5. Statistics Canada, Business Register; Statistics Canada, Census Profile; Localintel, Labour Market Gap Estimates of Census Areas. Published in Mar 13, 2026.

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