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Portage Regional Economic Development Economic Baseline Update

December 2025



A collaboration between:



Portage la Prairie
Community
Revitalization
Corporation

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Executive Summary

This Economic Baseline Update provides Portage Regional Economic Development (PRED) with a current analysis of economic parameters including economic, demographic, workforce, and housing statistics. The inputs to this report support the development of an Investment Impact Tool that will provide PRED with an economic impact model to determine the relationship between project characteristics and the potential outcomes for the local economy.

Purpose of the Report

This report serves as an essential resource for local decision-makers by delivering comprehensive data and analysis on the region's economic, demographic, workforce, and housing landscape, with a particular focus on immigration trends. This report is designed to inform the development and initiation of targeted programming that addresses the unique needs and opportunities within the Region of Portage la Prairie. The report provides valuable insights that can guide the creation of supportive immigration policies and programs. This document is not a strategic plan, nor does it establish specific key performance indicators, rather, it offers a foundational understanding to aid in informed decision-making and future planning efforts.

Summary of Key Findings

The Region of Portage la Prairie (which includes the census subdivision of the City of Portage la Prairie, R.M. of Portage la Prairie, Dakota Plains 6A, Dakota Tipi 1, Long Plain 6 and Long Plain IRI) has exhibited a small population increase between 2016 and 2021. The population has a moderately low proportion of working-age individuals (35.4% aged 25-54) and a significant cohort of children aged 0-14. The region has a smaller share of immigrants and non-permanent residents compared to the broader province of Manitoba. However, 675 new permanent residents have chosen Portage la Prairie as their home between 2018 and 2022. In addition, the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program has received 231 nominations for skilled workers from 2021 to 2023.

Economic indicators show that average income in the Region of Portage la Prairie has increased at a faster rate than the provincial average between 2015 and 2020. The majority of individuals earn between \$20,000 and \$39,999, with 29.3% earning over \$60,000 annually. The regional economy is predominantly driven by the health care and social assistance and manufacturing sectors. Employment is projected to grow by a total of 742 jobs by 2031.

Key industry subsectors include fruit and vegetable preserving and specialty food manufacturing¹ (663 jobs) and farms (665 jobs). The region is a net importer of workers, with 1,325 individuals commuting into the region for work and 770 commuting out, resulting in a net import of 555 workers.

As of June 2024, there were 2,104 businesses operating in the region, with a significant proportion being sole proprietorships (1,443). Among businesses with employees, 49.2% had four or fewer employees. The sectors with the highest number of total businesses include agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (25.6%), real estate and rental and

¹ Fruit and vegetable preserving and specialty food manufacturing refers to establishments primarily engaged in manufacturing frozen fruits and vegetables; frozen entrées and side dishes of several ingredients, except seafood; and fruits and vegetables preserved by pickling, canning, dehydrating and similar processes.

leasing (15.1%), and construction (7.0%). The region has a high concentration of individual and family services (LQ 2.0) and civic and social organizations (LQ 1.9) compared to the province, highlighting the many support organizations available to residents.

In summary, the Region of Portage la Prairie is characterized by a stable population, a growing average income, and a robust economy centered around health care, social assistance, and manufacturing. The region's business landscape is dominated by small enterprises, with a significant focus on agriculture and related activities. While employment growth is expected to be gradual, the region can attract new residents and skilled workers, contributing to its future economic resilience and development.

Data Overview

This report includes data for the Region of Portage la Prairie captured by data for the following census subdivisions, City of Portage la Prairie, Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie, Dakota Plains 6A (IRI), Dakota Tipi (IRI), Long Plain 6 (IRI) and Long Plain (IRI). The following data sources were used in developing this economic baseline analysis for the Region of Portage la Prairie.

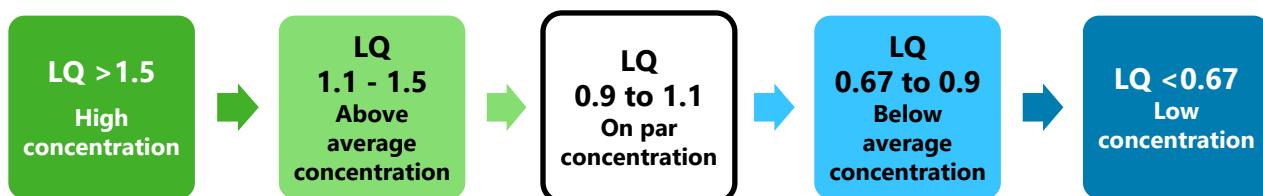
- Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Counts, June 2024
- Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2021, 2016, & 2011
- Lightcast Economic Modeling, datarun 2024.3

Notes on Data

- The June 2024 Canadian Business Counts were used to determine the total number of registered businesses in the Region of Portage la Prairie. Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Counts Data provides a record of business establishments by industry and size. This data is collected from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). The business data collected includes all local businesses that met at least one of the three following criteria: Have an employee workforce for which they submit payroll remittances to CRA, or have a minimum of \$30,000 in annual sales revenue, or are incorporated under a federal or provincial act and have filed a federal corporate income tax form within the past three years.
- The 2021 Census of Population is the latest and most widely available data product offered by Statistics Canada. To the date (March 2025) the data available through the Census profiles include population, age of population, dwelling trends, income trends, commuting patterns, immigration, status of population and educational attainment.

Definitions

As part of this economic baseline analysis, the Location Quotient (LQ) Analysis was completed to determine the concentration of industries (businesses) in the Region of Portage la Prairie relative to the Province of Manitoba. It reveals what makes a region unique. The LQ's Classifications are as follows:



Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Profile

Population Growth

In 2021, the Region of Portage la Prairie had a population of 21,822, an increase of 0.4% since 2016; this translates into 79 more residents within the region. This indicates that the population within the region has remained relatively stable in terms of overall size.

Figure 1 – Population Growth, 2011-2021

| Census Year | Region of Portage la Prairie | Manitoba |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| 2011 Census | 20,874 | 1,208,268 |
| 2016 Census | 21,743 | 1,278,365 |
| 2021 Census | 21,822 | 1,342,153 |
| 5-year change (2016-2021) | 79 | 63,788 |
| 5-year % change (2016-2021) | 0.4% | 5.0% |

Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, 2011 Census

In recent years, population has shown modest growth as estimated by Statistics Canada. The population estimates below differ from census figures as the data is not reliant on responses to the census survey. It is estimated that the Region of Portage la Prairie is growing at a slightly slower pace (5.2%) than the province of Manitoba (7.4%) between 2021 and 2024.

Figure 2 – Population Estimates, 2021-2024

| Census Year | Region of Portage la Prairie | Manitoba |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| 2021 Estimate | 22,801 | 1,391,924 |
| 2022 Estimate | 23,171 | 1,412,568 |
| 2023 Estimate | 23,431 | 1,454,743 |
| 2024 Estimate | 23,987 | 1,494,301 |
| 4-year % change (2021-2024) | 5.2% | 7.4% |

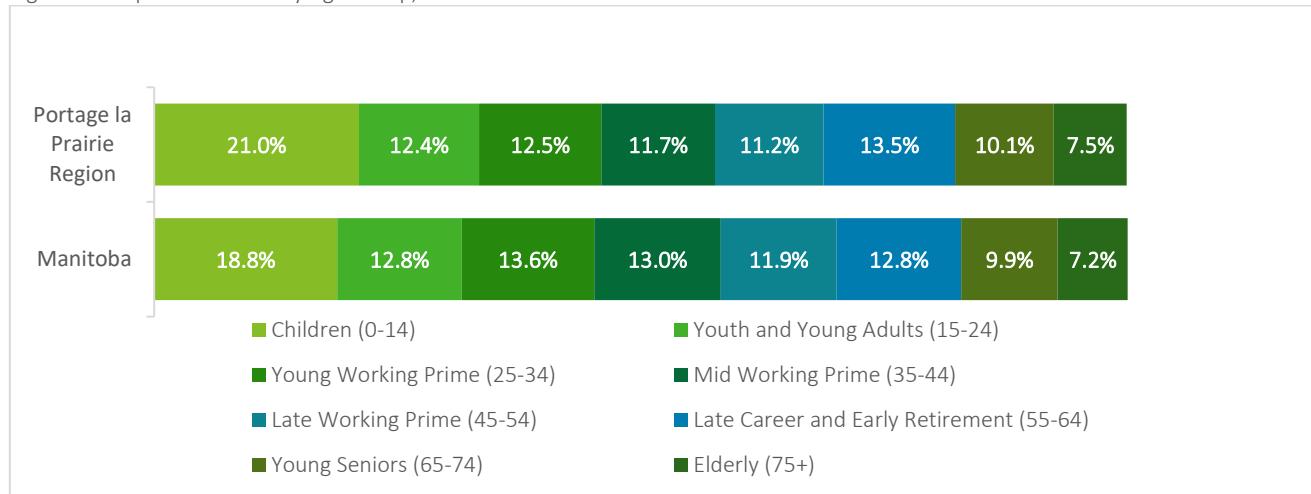
Source: Statistics Canada, Population estimates, July 1, by census subdivision, 2021 boundaries

Population Age

Most of the population in the Region of Portage la Prairie are between the ages of 0-14, the youngest age cohort. The region largely follows provincial age trends and has a slightly higher percentage of its population who are under 34 years of age. The Region of Portage la Prairie had a slightly lower average population age compared to the province at 39.4 years old compared to 39.7 years old in 2021. This is younger than the average age of Canada at 41.9 years old.

The Region of Portage la Prairie has a moderately low population of working age people. Approximately 35.4% of the population in the region is within the “working prime” age cohorts (people between the ages of 25 and 54) compared to 38.4% in Manitoba. The region also had a higher share of late career and early retirement aged population at 13.5%, compared to Manitoba at 12.8%.

Figure 3 – Population Share by Age Group, 2021

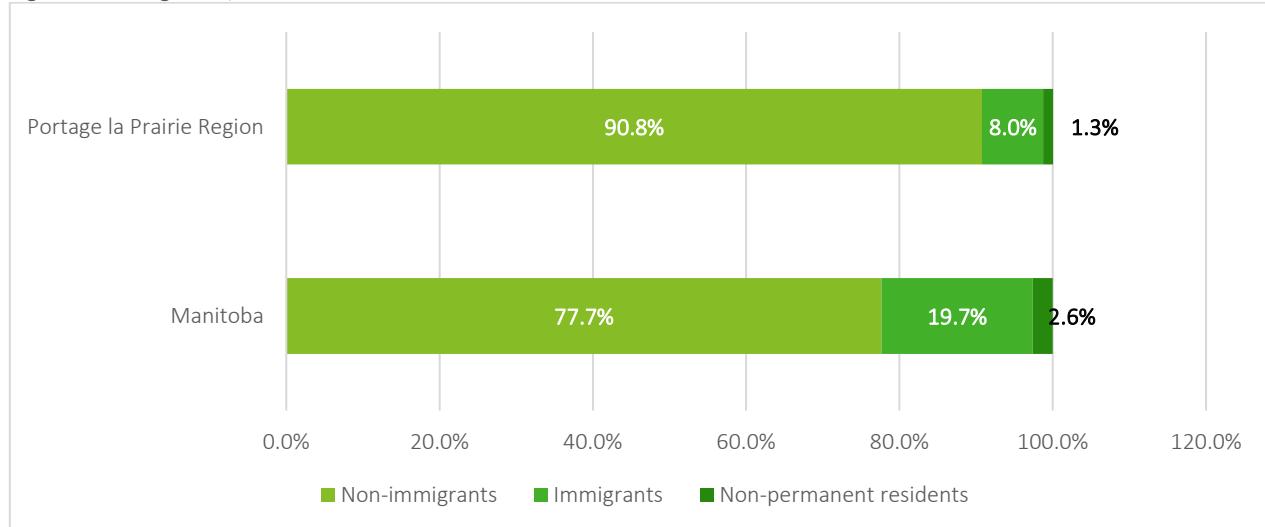


Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

Immigration

In 2021, the Region of Portage la Prairie had a smaller population of immigrants and non-permanent residents and a larger population of non-immigrants² compared to the province of Manitoba. This smaller percentage of immigrants compared to the province of Manitoba indicates that the Region of Portage la Prairie is typical for nonmetropolitan areas. The region has increased its share of immigrant population from 5.7% in 2016 to 8.0% in 2021. Between 2018 and 2022, Portage la Prairie admitted 675 new permanent residents to the city.³ As part of the Provincial Nominee Program, the City of Portage la Prairie has received 231 nominations for skilled workers between 2021 and 2023 (1.2% of total nominees).⁴

Figure 4 – Immigration, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2021

The number of permanent residents whose intended destination is Portage la Prairie has increased on a per-year basis consistently since 2006. Notably, 2021 and 2022 saw an increase in the number of permanent residents in the city of 145 and 270 respectively. This increase is likely attributed to a changing federal immigration policy which supported an increase in immigration.

² Non-immigrants: refer to persons who are Canadian citizens by birth.

³ Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Permanent Resident Admission Tables, 2025.

⁴ Immigrate Manitoba, Annual Reports 2021-2023.

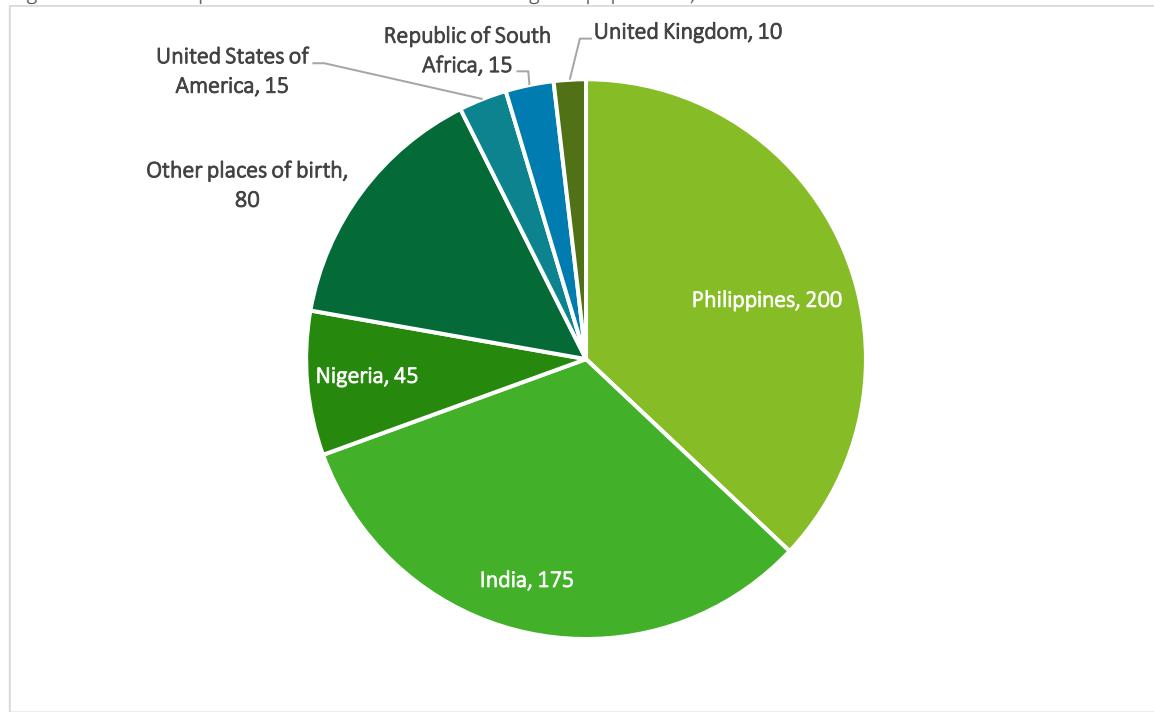
Figure 5 – Admissions of Permanent Residents, Portage la Prairie, 1999-2022



Source: IRCC, 2025

Of the 565 recent immigrants to the Region of Portage la Prairie (new immigrants between 2016 and 2021), 37.0% were born in the Philippines. India, the next largest country by place of birth accounted for 32.4% of these new immigrants. Africa was the next largest continent by place of birth and accounted for 13.0% of new immigrants. Compared to the province of Manitoba, a proportionately higher percent of immigrants by place of birth came from Philippines, India, United States, South Africa, and United Kingdom.

Figure 6 – Selected places of birth for the recent immigrant population, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2021

Immigration by age in the Region of Portage la Prairie closely resembles the patterns seen across the province. There are a higher percentage of children under five years old who immigrated to the region compared to across Manitoba. Attracting a young immigrant population to a region is important to support labour force needs and to support increased innovation within a community.

Figure 7 – Age at immigration

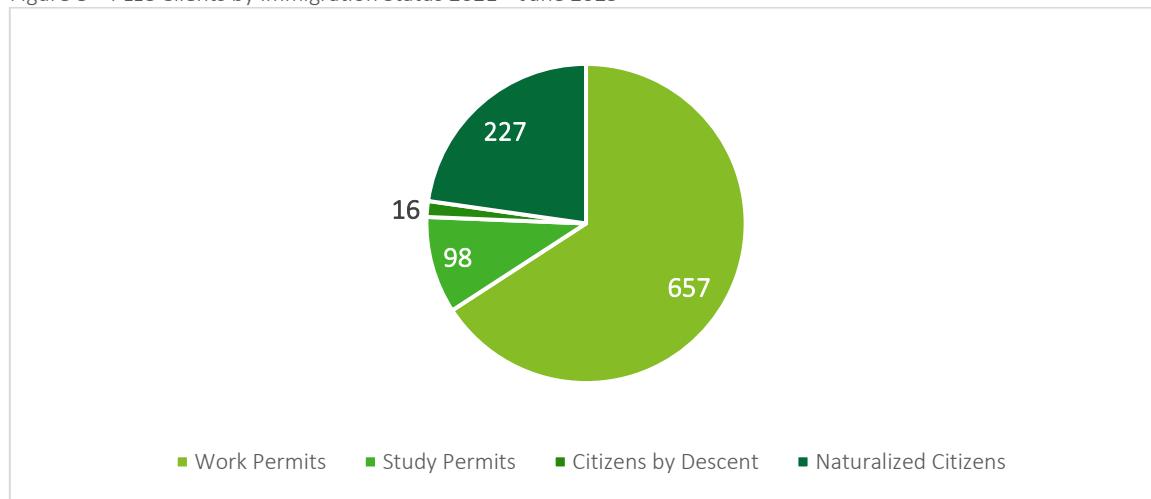


Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2021

More recent data from local immigration service providers show a dramatic increase in the number of immigrants to the Region of Portage la Prairie. Data provided by the Portage Learning and Literacy Centre (PLLC) capture the minimum number of new migrants to the Region of Portage la Prairie. It is likely that individuals are missing from this data as they did not utilize the services of PLLC. These figures only represent one side of the net migration flow and do not capture the number of individuals who move away from the region each year. These figures represent new immigrants who arrived in Portage la Prairie during the specified period. PLLC continues to work with clients who arrived prior to 2021. The most reliable figures provided by PLLC are those related to permanent residents (PRs) and individuals who identified as newcomers but are either not yet PRs (e.g. on work or study permits) or are no longer PRs (e.g. naturalized citizens).

Portage Learning and Literacy Centre (PLLC) had 998 clients between 2021 and the end of June 2025. Most of these clients (65.8%) arrived under work permits followed by naturalized citizens (22.7%).

Figure 8 – PLLC Clients by Immigration Status 2021 – June 2025

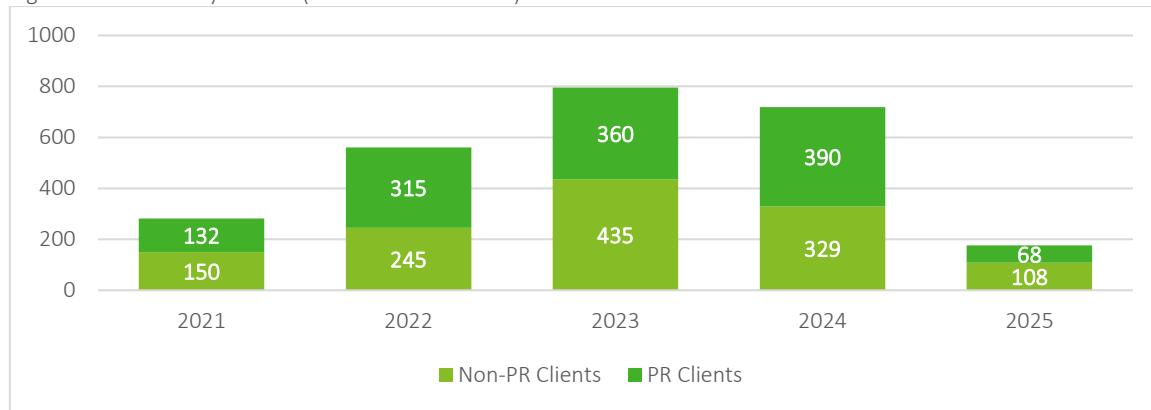


Source: Portage Learning and Literacy Centre

Yearly arrival numbers are based upon arrival year to the region as opposed to when they registered for immigration. In 2022 there is missing data for non-PR clients, and 2021 data is estimated due to missing data which was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

In 2023 PLLC captured the largest number of immigrant arrivals to the region with a total of 735 individuals. Halfway through 2025, immigration counts are significantly lower than prior years, likely due to changes in federal immigration policy for Canada.

Figure 9 – PLLC Yearly Arrivals (Based on Arrival Year) 2021 – June 2025



Source: Portage Learning and Literacy Centre

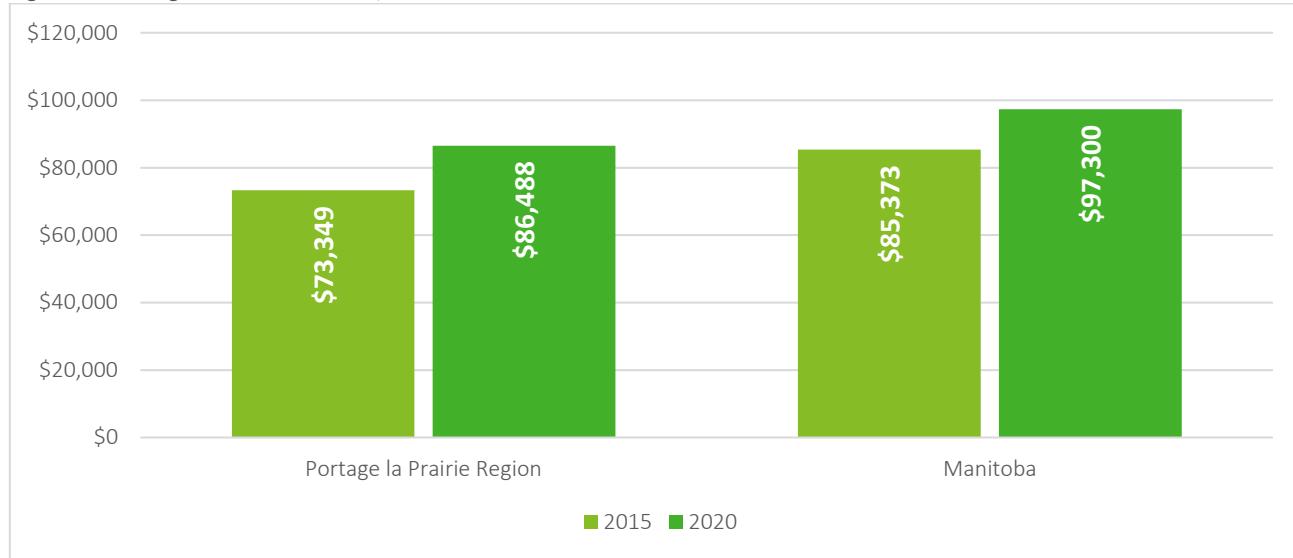
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada released a forward-looking snapshot of national immigration targets over the next three years. This plan identifies that permanent resident targets in Canada will reduce by 105,000 in 2025 with further reductions in 2026 and 2027. Over 40% of new permanent residents are expected to be individuals in Canada already as temporary residents. In terms of temporary residents, Canada will reduce the number to 5% of the Canada's population by the end of 2026.⁵ The Region of Portage la Prairie should expect to see overall declines in line with the most recent Immigration Levels Plan. The overall decline in immigration across Canada could increase competition among municipalities when attract new skilled immigrants to meet labour shortages.

Income

In 2015 the Region of Portage la Prairie had a lower average household income compared to the province of Manitoba. Data is suppressed for Dakota Plains 6A, Dakota Tipi 1 and Long Plain IRI and have been excluded from the average household income calculation. Between 2015 and 2020, the region has seen its average household income increase by \$13,139 or 17.9%. During this same period, the province has seen its average household income grow by \$11,927 or 14.0% showing that wages have grown faster in the Region of Portage la Prairie compared to the province. An increase in the average household income supports a stronger economy as it provides additional purchasing power to residents to spend at local establishments.

⁵ 2025-2027 Immigration Levels Plan, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2024.

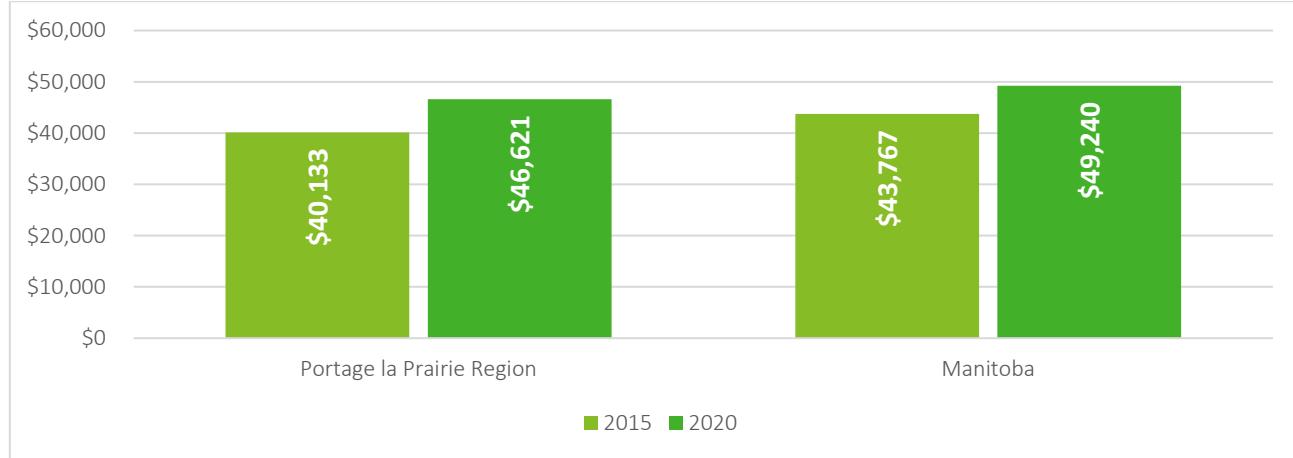
Figure 10 -Average Household Income, 2020



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, 2021 Census

In 2020 the Region of Portage la Prairie had a slightly lower average individual income compared to the province. Between 2015 and 2020 the region's average income (16.2%) has grown at a faster rate than the province's (12.5%). Data is suppressed for Dakota Plains 6A, Dakota Tipi 1 and Long Plain IRI and have been excluded from the average individual income calculation.

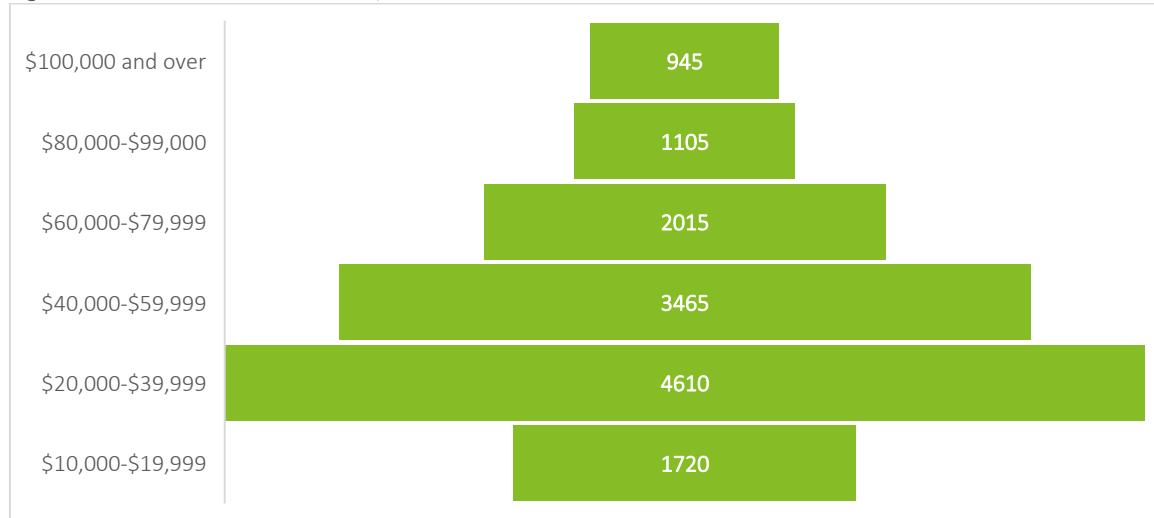
Figure 11 -Average Individual Income, 2020



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, 2021 Census

Most individuals in the Region of Portage la Prairie receive an income between \$20,000 and \$39,999 (33.3%). However, 54.3% of total income earners in the region earn above \$40,000 and 29.3% earn above \$60,000 annually. Having a strong percentage of the population earning a living wage supports a strong local economy and supports the attraction of new residents by offering financial opportunities to improve their quality of life.

Figure 12 - Individual Income Brackets, 2021

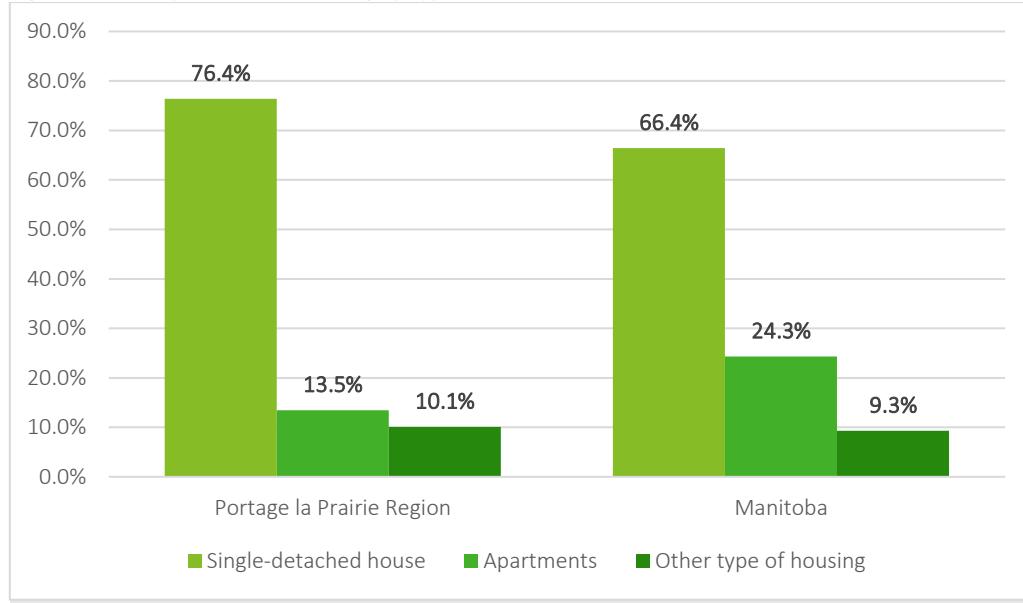


Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

Dwellings

As per the 2021 Census, the Region of Portage la Prairie had 9,260 occupied private dwellings. As shown in the figure below, the region's existing housing stock is predominately comprised of single-detached dwelling (i.e., low-density units) at 76.4%. The region's apartment buildings represented 13.5% of the region's dwellings. It is understood that a wide variety of housing types is needed to support a younger cohort, newcomers, immigrants, single households, and seniors. This will, in turn, attract and encourage residents to live, work, and or retire in the city.

Figure 13 – Occupied Private Dwelling by Type, 2021



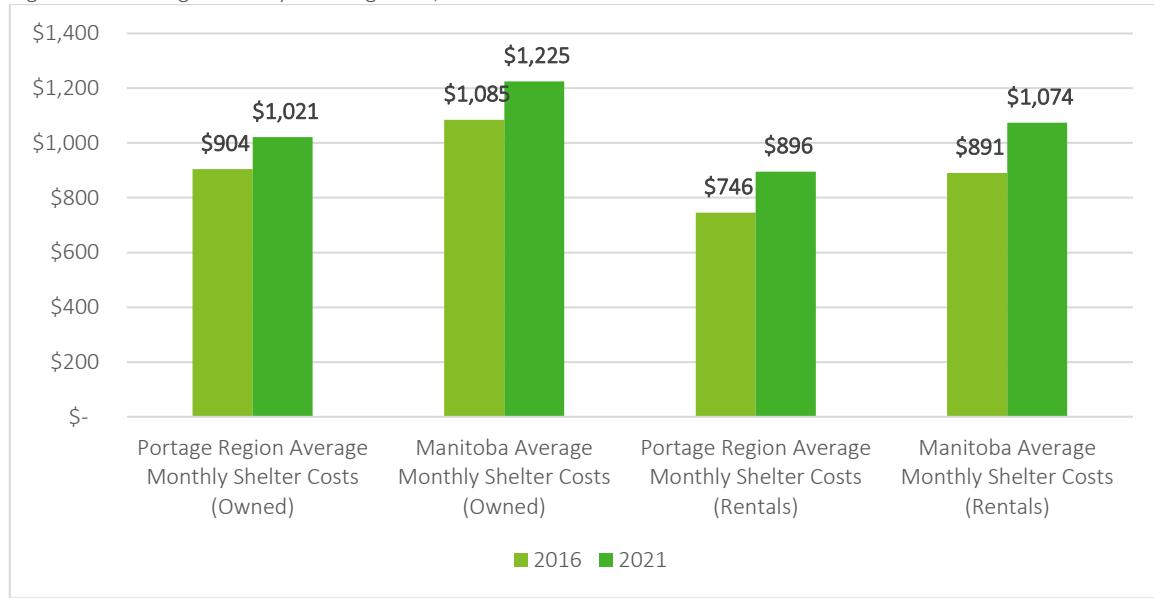
Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

The average value of dwellings in the Region of Portage la Prairie was \$258,630.17 in 2021.⁶ Data is suppressed for Dakota Plains 6A, Dakota Tipi 1, Long Plain 6 and Long Plain IRI and have been excluded from the average dwelling value and average monthly dwelling costs calculations.

⁶ Statistics Canada, 2021 Census.

Owners of property had an average cost of dwellings of \$904 per month while the average monthly shelter cost for renters was \$896 in 2021.⁷ These figures are lower than the overall shelter costs for Manitoba. Dwelling costs in the Region of Portage la Prairie grew at similar rates compared to Manitoba between 2016 and 2021.

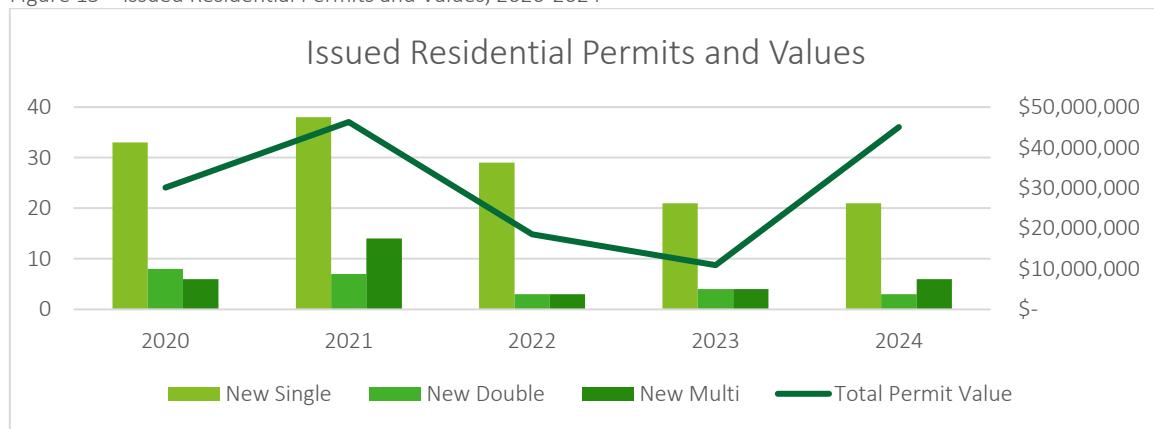
Figure 14 – Average Monthly Dwelling Costs, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

According to the Portage la Prairie Planning District, The City of Portage la Prairie and Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie saw a total of 30 permits issued for new single, double, or multi-unit residential units in 2024, for a total value of \$45.0 million.⁸ This is significantly higher than 2022 and 2023 and nearly matches the total value of \$46.3 million in 2021. Since 2021, the total number of permits issued for new single, double, or multi unit residential properties has declined, except for 2024, which saw one additional permit compared to the previous year. According to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), The Portage la Prairie census agglomeration saw a total of 195 dwellings starts in 2024.⁹ 95.4% of these new dwelling starts were for apartments in the city¹⁰ which indicates increased demand for higher density housing.

Figure 15 – Issued Residential Permits and Values, 2020-2024



Source: Portage la Prairie Planning District, Annual Statistics 2020-2024, 2025.

⁷ Statistics Canada, 2021 Census.

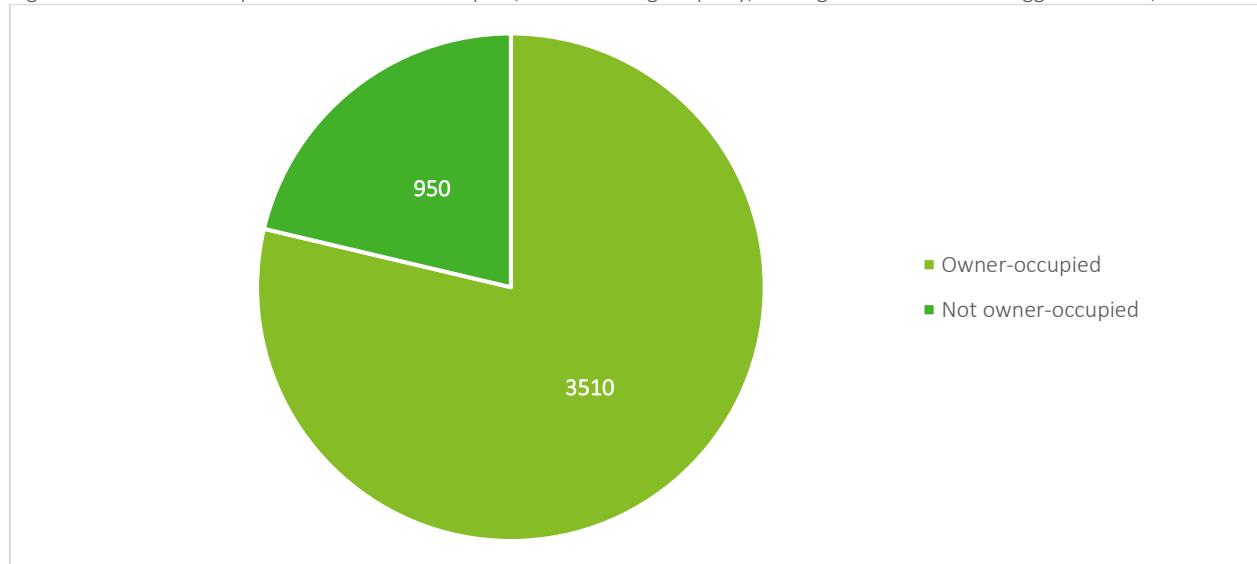
⁸ Portage la Prairie Planning District, Annual Statistics 2020-2024, 2025.

⁹ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Housing Market Information Portal*, 2025.

¹⁰ Ibid.

The majority of housing in the Portage la Prairie Census Agglomeration is owner-occupied accounting for 78.7% of total units in 2022. Non-owner-occupied units (i.e. rental units) have increased slightly by percentage of total units from 19.0% in 2020 to 21.3% in 2022.

Figure 16 – Owner-occupied vs non-owner-occupied, Total Housing Property, Portage la Prairie Census Agglomeration, 2022



Source: Statistics Canada, Ownership type and property use by residential property type and period of construction, 2022

Key Takeaways

- The Region of Portage la Prairie's population experienced small growth between 2016 and 2021. The region has a moderately low population of working age people with 35.4% of the population being aged between 25 and 54, the region's largest age cohort is children between 0 and 14. Between 2021 and 2024, population growth in the region has accelerated and has grown 5.2%.
- The recent growth in population can be partially attributed to increased immigration. The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program brought 320 new permanent residents to the City of Portage la Prairie between 2019 and 2021 and has received 231 nominations for skilled workers between 2021 and 2023. The Region of Portage la Prairie has a smaller share of immigrants and non-permanent residents compared to the province.
- Average individual income has increased at a similar rate in the Region of Portage la Prairie compared to the province of Manitoba between 2015 and 2020. Most individuals in the region have an income between \$20,000 and \$39,999. 29.0% of the region's population earns over \$60,000 annually.

Employment Characteristics

Employment in Region of Portage la Prairie

Historical Growth

In 2019, the number of jobs in the Region of Portage la Prairie reached 11,580 (682 additional jobs since 2014, a 6.3% increase). With the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, local jobs suffered a decline with total employment declining to near 2015 levels with 10,973 estimated jobs for the region, a decrease of 3.4% from 2019. By 2021, employment in the Region of Portage la Prairie rebounded to an estimated at 11,341 jobs. Compared to the overall impact of the COVID-19 in Manitoba (decline in jobs of 6.6%), the region was more resilient to the negative impacts for employment due to the pandemic. From 2022 to 2023, employment in the region was estimated to increase by 642 jobs.

Figure 17 – Employment in Region of Portage la Prairie, 2011-2023



Source: Lightcast, datarun 2024.3

Employment by Industry Sector

The Region of Portage la Prairie's economy gravitates mostly around the health care and social assistance and manufacturing sectors. The goods-producing sectors¹¹, which tend to be export base industries, only represent 24.6% of the region's jobs (2,901 jobs).

In 2023, the largest industry sectors by employment in the region were health care and social assistance (2,278 jobs – 19.3% of jobs), manufacturing (1,362 jobs – 11.6% of jobs), retail trade (1,073 jobs – 9.1% of jobs), and public administration (1,018 jobs – 8.6% of jobs). The region has a significantly larger share of jobs in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting compared to the province of Manitoba.

¹¹ Goods producing sectors include; Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction, utilities, construction, and manufacturing.

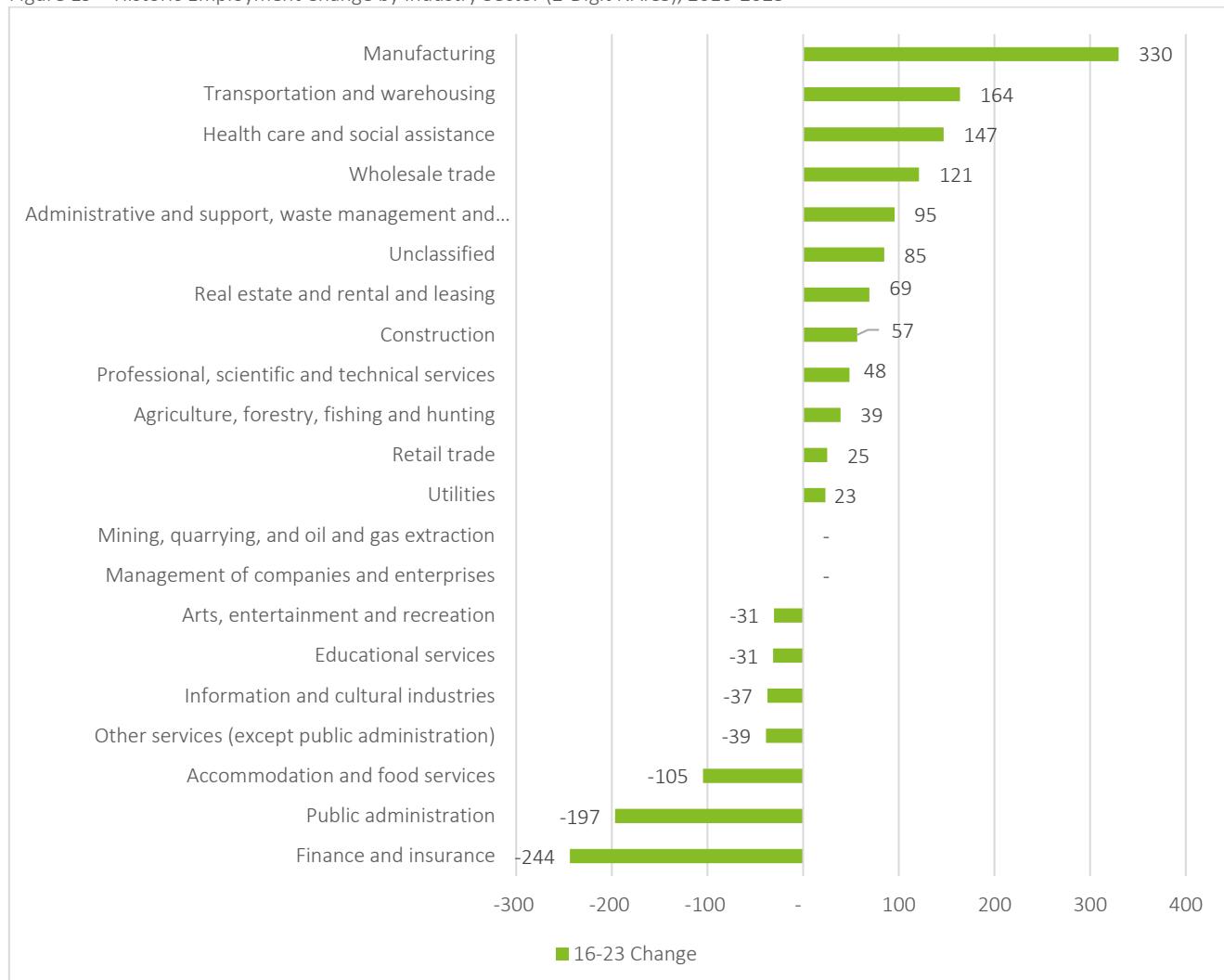
Figure 18 -Employment by Industry Sector (2-Digit NAICS), 2023

| Description | Region of Portage la Prairie | Manitoba | Region of Portage la Prairie LQ |
|--|------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting | 5.9% | 2.9% | 2.1 |
| Manufacturing | 11.6% | 8.2% | 1.4 |
| Health care and social assistance | 19.3% | 15.3% | 1.3 |
| Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services | 4.3% | 3.4% | 1.3 |
| Wholesale trade | 4.2% | 3.6% | 1.2 |
| Public administration | 8.6% | 7.7% | 1.1 |
| Real estate and rental and leasing | 1.6% | 1.5% | 1.1 |
| Unclassified | 1.8% | 1.8% | 1.0 |
| Construction | 6.5% | 6.7% | 1.0 |
| Accommodation and food services | 5.9% | 6.3% | 0.9 |
| Retail trade | 9.1% | 9.8% | 0.9 |
| Other services (except public administration) | 3.5% | 4.0% | 0.9 |
| Utilities | 0.6% | 0.7% | 0.8 |
| Educational services | 6.2% | 7.5% | 0.8 |
| Transportation and warehousing | 5.0% | 6.2% | 0.8 |
| Professional, scientific and technical services | 2.3% | 3.9% | 0.6 |
| Finance and insurance | 2.6% | 4.8% | 0.5 |
| Arts, entertainment and recreation | 0.8% | 2.0% | 0.4 |
| Information and cultural industries | 0.4% | 2.6% | 0.1 |
| Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction | 0.0% | 0.4% | 0.0 |
| Management of companies and enterprises | 0.0% | 0.6% | 0.0 |

Source: Lightcast, datarun 2024.3 | *Goods-producing industries

Between 2016 and 2023, the industries that added more jobs to the Region of Portage la Prairie economy were manufacturing (+330 jobs), transportation and warehousing (+164 jobs), and health care and social assistance (+147 jobs). During this time some industries experienced declines, such as the finance and insurance sector which lost 244 jobs and the accommodation and food services sector which lost 105 jobs during this period.

Figure 19 – Historic Employment Change by Industry Sector (2-Digit NAICS), 2016-2023



Source: Lightcast, datarun 2024.3

A deeper analysis shows that the largest industry subsectors (4-digit NAICS) in the Region of Portage la Prairie are fruit and vegetable preserving and specialty food manufacturing¹² (663 jobs) followed by farms (655 jobs). Fruit and vegetable preserving and specialty food manufacturing is the industry with most concentrated employment within the Region of Portage la Prairie with an LQ of 43.1, followed by facilities support services (LQ 23.3), and technical and trade schools (LQ 15.7).

Figure 20 – Top Industry Subsectors (4-Digit NAICS) by Employment LQ (Min 50 jobs), Region of Portage la Prairie, 2016-2023

| NAICS | Description | Estimated 2016 Jobs | Estimated 2023 Jobs | Estimated Net Change | 2023 LQ | % Change |
|-------------|---|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------|----------|
| 3114 | Fruit and vegetable preserving and specialty food manufacturing | 645 | 663 | 18 | 43.1 | 3% |
| 5612 | Facilities support services | 10 | 105 | 95 | 23.3 | 913% |
| 6115 | Technical and trade schools | 25 | 115 | 90 | 15.7 | 362% |

¹² Fruit and vegetable preserving and specialty food manufacturing refers to establishments primarily engaged in manufacturing frozen fruits and vegetables; frozen entrées and side dishes of several ingredients, except seafood; and fruits and vegetables preserved by pickling, canning, dehydrating and similar processes.

| NAICS | Description | Estimated 2016 Jobs | Estimated 2023 Jobs | Estimated Net Change | 2023 LQ | % Change |
|-------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------|----------|
| 3112 | Grain and oilseed milling | 151 | 115 | -36 | 10.7 | -24% |
| 3327 | Machine shops, turned product, and screw, nut and bolt manufacturing | 13 | 137 | 124 | 7.3 | 969% |
| 4152 | New motor vehicle parts and accessories merchant wholesalers | <10 | 105 | N/A | 6.8 | N/A |
| 4812 | Non-scheduled air transportation | 62 | 104 | 42 | 6.5 | 68% |
| 3119 | Other food manufacturing | 27 | 143 | 115 | 5.3 | 421% |
| 1150 | Support activities for farms | 34 | 40 | 5 | 5.3 | 16% |
| 4121 | Petroleum and petroleum products merchant wholesalers | <10 | 69 | N/A | 4.8 | N/A |
| 4171 | Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment merchant wholesalers | 145 | 149 | 4 | 4.6 | 3% |
| 4881 | Support activities for air transportation | 31 | 62 | 31 | 4.1 | 101% |
| 5324 | Commercial and industrial machinery and equipment rental and leasing | 0 | 47 | 47 | 3.9 | N/A |
| 4531 | Florists | <10 | 12 | N/A | 2.3 | N/A |
| 6231 | Nursing care facilities | 477 | 533 | 56 | 2.3 | 12% |
| 6232 | Residential developmental handicap, mental health and substance abuse facilities | 240 | 227 | -13 | 2.3 | -6% |
| 4521 | Department stores | 142 | 138 | -4 | 2.1 | -3% |
| 1110 | Farms | 603 | 655 | 52 | 2.0 | 9% |
| 5611 | Office administrative services | 32 | 75 | 43 | 2.0 | 134% |
| 6211 | Offices of physicians | 117 | 184 | 67 | 1.9 | 57% |

Source: Lightcast, datarun 2024.3

Employment by Occupational Category

As mentioned earlier, the Region of Portage la Prairie economy is specialized in the health care and social assistance and manufacturing sectors. Regardless of this, in 2023, sales and service occupations had the highest share of overall employment in the region, and employed 2,629 people, representing 22.3% of jobs. The share of occupations in natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations in the region is considerably higher than that of the province with an LQ of 1.8.

Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations ranked second in terms of employment (18.3% of local jobs). The share of trades jobs in the region is slightly higher than the province of Manitoba.

Figure 21 - Employment by Occupational Category (1-Digit NOC), 2023

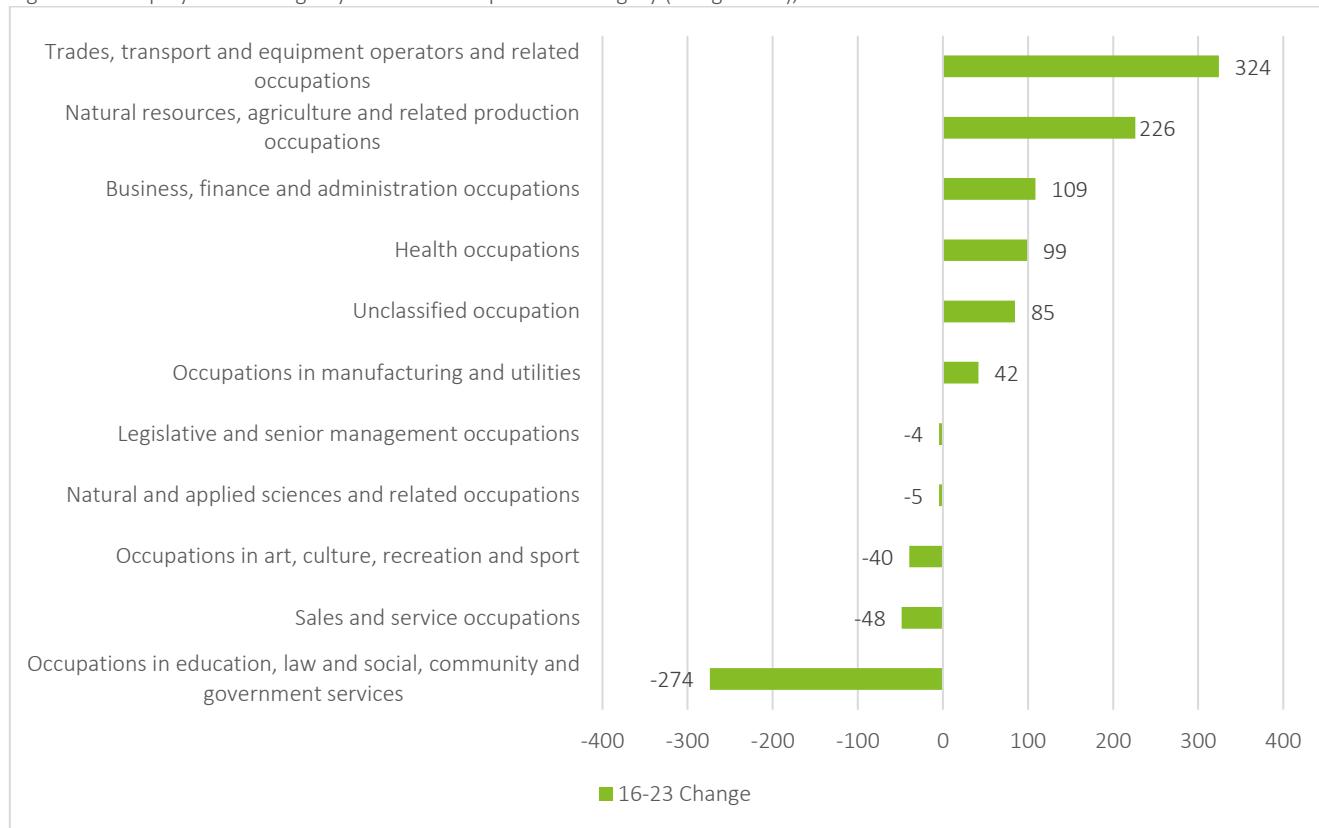
| Description | Region of Portage la Prairie | Manitoba | Region of Portage la Prairie LQ |
|--|------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|
| Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations | 6.8% | 3.8% | 1.8 |
| Legislative and senior management occupations | 0.3% | 0.3% | 1.4 |

| Description | Region of Portage la Prairie | Manitoba | Region of Portage la Prairie LQ |
|--|------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|
| Health occupations | 11.8% | 9.1% | 1.3 |
| Occupations in manufacturing and utilities | 6.8% | 5.7% | 1.2 |
| Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations | 18.3% | 17.4% | 1.1 |
| Unclassified occupation | 1.8% | 1.8% | 1.0 |
| Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services | 13.0% | 13.5% | 1.0 |
| Sales and service occupations | 22.3% | 24.1% | 0.9 |
| Business, finance and administration occupations | 14.6% | 16.1% | 0.9 |
| Natural and applied sciences and related occupations | 3.5% | 6.1% | 0.6 |
| Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport | 0.8% | 2.2% | 0.4 |

Source: Lightcast, datarun 2024.3

Between 2016 to 2023 the largest declines in occupations occurred in occupations in education, law and social, community and government services (-274 jobs) and sales and service occupations (-48 jobs). Employment has grown the most in trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations (+324 jobs) and natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations (+226 jobs).

Figure 22 - Employment Change by Selected Occupational Category (1-Digit NOC), 2016-2023



Source: Lightcast, datarun 2024.3

A deeper analysis shows that the largest occupational subcategories (4-digit NOC) in the Region of Portage la Prairie are assisting occupations in support of health services (556 jobs), followed by managers in agriculture, horticulture and aquaculture (435 jobs). The largest concentration of occupations in the Region of Portage la Prairie is transportation officers and controllers with a LQ of 4.4.

Figure 23 - Top Occupational Categories (4-Digit NOC) by Employment LQ (Min 50 jobs), Region of Portage la Prairie, 2023-2031

| NOC | Description | 2016 Jobs | 2023 Jobs | Net Change | 2023 LQ | % Change |
|-------------|--|-----------|-----------|------------|---------|----------|
| 7260 | Transportation officers and controllers | 52 | 96 | 43 | 4.4 | 83% |
| 9414 | Machine operators and related workers in food, beverage and associated products processing | 197 | 257 | 60 | 2.7 | 31% |
| 2112 | Public and environmental health and safety professionals | <10 | 14 | N/A | 2.7 | N/A |
| 4131 | Police investigators and probation officers | 32 | 23 | -8 | 2.5 | -26% |
| 8002 | Managers in agriculture, horticulture and aquaculture | 259 | 435 | 176 | 2.5 | 68% |
| 9201 | Supervisors, processing and manufacturing occupations | 102 | 118 | 16 | 2.4 | 15% |
| 8412 | Workers in agriculture and fishing occupations | 21 | 74 | 53 | 2.2 | 255% |
| 2210 | Technical occupations in physical sciences | 20 | 31 | 11 | 2.1 | 55% |
| 8510 | Agriculture, horticulture and harvesting labourers and related occupations | 176 | 197 | 21 | 1.9 | 12% |
| 9210 | Utilities equipment operators and controllers | 55 | 47 | -8 | 1.8 | -14% |
| 7240 | Machinery and transportation equipment mechanics (except motor vehicles) | 189 | 255 | 66 | 1.8 | 35% |
| 9510 | Labourers in processing, manufacturing and utilities | 195 | 179 | -15 | 1.7 | -8% |
| 3210 | Technical occupations in therapy and assessment | 155 | 167 | 12 | 1.7 | 8% |
| 4001 | Managers in public administration | 27 | 35 | 8 | 1.6 | 29% |
| 4320 | Assisting occupations in legal and public protection | 110 | 94 | -16 | 1.6 | -15% |
| 3001 | Managers in health care | 31 | 29 | -2 | 1.5 | -8% |
| 4210 | Occupations in front-line public protection services | 117 | 110 | -7 | 1.5 | -6% |
| 3310 | Assisting occupations in support of health services | 608 | 556 | -52 | 1.5 | -9% |
| 3220 | Practitioners of natural healing | 14 | 43 | 28 | 1.4 | 196% |
| 3130 | Nursing and allied health professionals | 299 | 380 | 81 | 1.4 | 27% |

Source: Lightcast, datarun 2024.3

Commuting Patterns in Region of Portage la Prairie

From this analysis of Region of Portage la Prairie's commuting patterns, 1,325 individuals commute into the region for work from outside the census division boundaries, and 770 people commute out of the region for work. From this, we can identify that the Region of Portage la Prairie is a significant employment centre for the surrounding communities and attracts a net inflow of 555 workers. In 2021, 885 people in the region reported their work status as 'worked at home',¹³ which is an increase of 310 individuals compared to 2016.¹⁴ This increase can largely be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic which caused a significant shift towards a work from home environment.

Most of the people commuting out of the Region of Portage la Prairie have the RM of Macdonald (230 individuals or 29.9% of total outflow) or Winnipeg (165 individuals or 21.4% of total outflow) as their main destination. On the opposite direction, most of the workers coming into the region have Winnipeg as their place of residence (390 individuals or 29.4% of total inflow).¹⁵

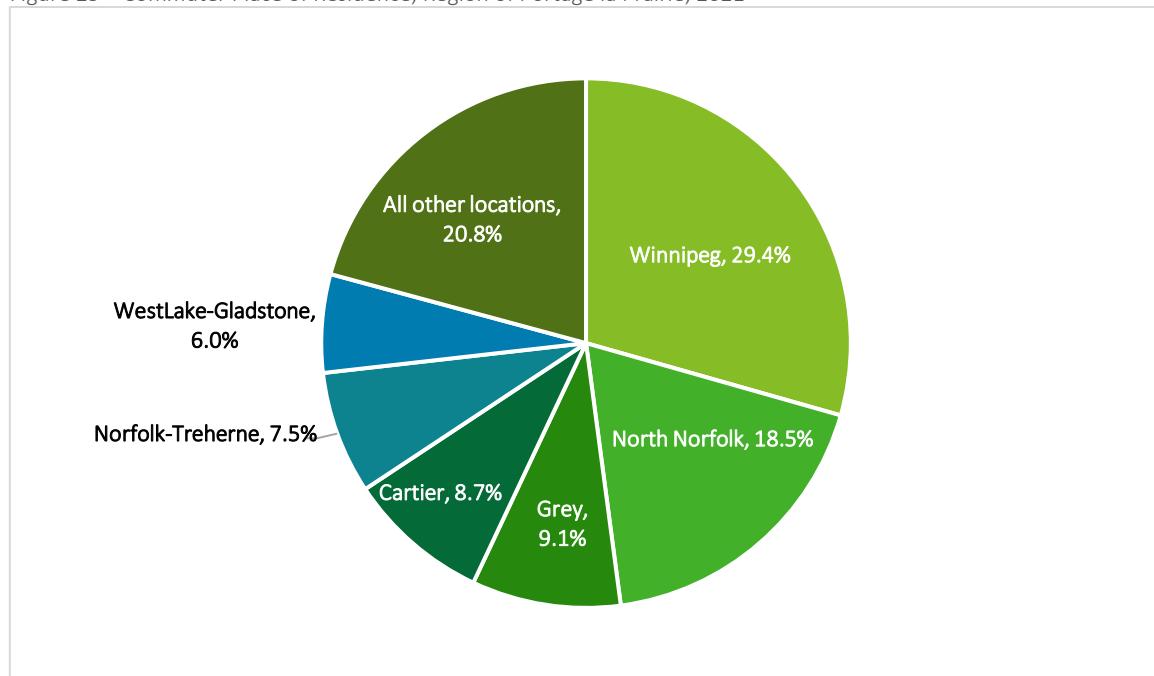
Figure 24 – Commuting Flows, Region of Portage la Prairie, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census, Statistics Canada, Commuting flow from geography of residence to geography of work by gender

Nearly one-third of all commuters to the Region of Portage la Prairie originate from Winnipeg, Manitoba's largest population centre. North Norfolk, just neighbouring the region to the west is the second largest place of residence for commuters (18.5%) into the region.

Figure 25 – Commuter Place of Residence, Region of Portage la Prairie, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census, Statistics Canada, Commuting flow from geography of residence to geography of work by gender

¹³ Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile

¹⁴ Statistics Canada, 2016 Census Profile

¹⁵ Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0459-01 Commuting flow from geography of residence to geography of work by gender: Census subdivisions

A public transportation feasibility study was conducted for the City of Portage la Prairie in 2021. The study looked at transit options across the City of Portage la Prairie, Dakota Tipi Southport, and Poplar Bluff Industrial Park. The report recommended undertaking a two-year transit service pilot to determine ridership, popular routes, and core times for service. The pilot was suggested to include an on-demand service, where riders book trips between stops within the service zone using minivans or minibuses. To-date a public transit pilot has not commenced for Portage la Prairie.

Key Takeaways

- The Region of Portage la Prairie economy is specialized in the health care and social assistance and manufacturing sectors. In 2023, there were 12,554 jobs in the Region of Portage la Prairie. The region is expected to add employment slowly over the next several years with 378 new jobs by 2031.
- The largest industry subsectors (4-digit NAICS) in the Region of Portage la Prairie are farms (1,074 jobs), and fruit and vegetable preserving and speciality food manufacturing (666 jobs). Other ambulatory health care services (+191 jobs) and nursing care facilities (+122 jobs) are expected to add the largest number of jobs in the region by 2031.
- Sales and service occupations had the highest share of overall employment in the region, and employed 2,667 people, representing 21.2% of jobs. The largest occupational subcategories (4-digit NOC) in the region are managers in agriculture, horticulture and aquaculture (652 jobs) and assisting occupations in support of health services (538 jobs).
- 1,325 individuals commute into the Region of Portage la Prairie for work and 770 people commute out of the region for work. This indicates that the region is a significant employment centre for the surrounding communities and attracts a net inflow of 555 workers.

Business Environment and Structure

Business Characteristics

A business characteristics assessment was completed to understand the number and type of businesses in the Portage la Prairie using the Canadian Business Counts. Specifically, businesses in the region were profiled by total employee number, size of business establishments by employees, and businesses by industry.

Business Characteristics in the Region of Portage la Prairie

As of June 2024, 2,104 businesses were operating in the Region of Portage la Prairie. The figure below shows the total businesses in the city, the majority of which were businesses without employees (i.e., self-employed). 1,443 businesses fall under this category. A total of 661 businesses with employees were operating in the region, 49.2% of businesses with employees employed between one and four people.

As shown in the figure below, the following sectors have the highest proportion of business establishments by industry in June 2024. These include business without employees and businesses with employees.

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting – 538 businesses (25.6% of total businesses)
- Real estate and rental and leasing – 317 businesses (15.1% of total businesses)
- Construction – 148 businesses (7.0% of total businesses)

The top two industry sectors with the highest number of businesses without employees in June of 2024 were the same as the highest total business establishment proportions, with construction rounding out the top three. The percent of total businesses for agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting and real estate and rental and leasing was significantly higher than that of total businesses. The highest number of businesses without employees in 2024 were in the following sectors:

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting – 457 businesses (31.7% of total businesses without employees)
- Real estate and rental and leasing – 292 businesses (20.2% of total businesses without employees)
- Construction – 85 businesses (5.9% of total businesses without employees)

The top industry sectors with employees in 2024 were:

- Retail trade – 85 businesses (12.9% of total businesses with employees)
- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting – 81 businesses (12.3% of total businesses with employees)
- Other services (except public administration) – 75 businesses (11.3% of total businesses with employees)

Business establishments in the Region of Portage la Prairie are characterized by micro-businesses¹⁶, with 49.2% of businesses employing between 1-4 workers, and 35.1% of businesses employing between 5-19 employees. It is important to note the small number of medium- and large-size firms in the region economy. Small firms are generally the major source of new products and ideas, while mid-size and large business are typically more export-oriented and generate higher operating surpluses. A healthy mix of small, medium, and large firms ensures that a community can capitalize on innovation and entrepreneurship opportunities and at the same time attract and grow investment. Micro and small businesses are also more susceptible to fluctuations in the economy.

¹⁶ Micro businesses are defined as businesses with less than five employees.

Figure 26 – Canadian Business Counts, Region of Portage la Prairie, June 2024

| Description | With Employees | Without Employees | Total | LQ |
|--|----------------|-------------------|--------------|-----|
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting | 81 | 457 | 538 | 1.7 |
| Real estate and rental and leasing | 25 | 292 | 317 | 1.0 |
| Unclassified | 36 | 159 | 195 | 0.8 |
| Construction | 63 | 85 | 148 | 0.9 |
| Other services (except public administration) | 75 | 72 | 147 | 1.2 |
| Health care and social assistance | 74 | 54 | 128 | 1.0 |
| Retail trade | 85 | 34 | 119 | 1.2 |
| Professional, scientific and technical services | 38 | 53 | 91 | 0.8 |
| Finance and insurance | 22 | 67 | 89 | 1.0 |
| Transportation and warehousing | 28 | 52 | 80 | 0.5 |
| Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services | 22 | 28 | 50 | 1.0 |
| Accommodation and food services | 41 | 8 | 49 | 1.1 |
| Manufacturing | 21 | 22 | 43 | 1.0 |
| Wholesale trade | 20 | 19 | 39 | 0.8 |
| Arts, entertainment and recreation | 4 | 14 | 18 | 0.4 |
| Management of companies and enterprises | 3 | 14 | 17 | 0.8 |
| Educational services | 5 | 10 | 15 | 0.7 |
| Information and cultural industries | 10 | 2 | 12 | 1.2 |
| Public administration | 6 | 0 | 6 | 0.8 |
| Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0.5 |
| Utilities | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1.6 |
| Total | 661 | 1,443 | 2,104 | |

Source: Lightcast, datarun 2024.3 – Canadian Business Counts

Region of Portage la Prairie industries were benchmarked against the province of Manitoba at the 2-digit industry sub-sector level to determine the business concentration for businesses with employees. This analysis above identified that only agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting had a significant concentration of businesses (defined as an LQ above 1.5) compared to the province.

Subsector Business Characteristics in the Region of Portage la Prairie

In terms of subsectors, industries with significant numbers of businesses with employees in the Region of Portage la Prairie, that are concentrated in the region include individual and family services (LQ 2.0), civic and social organizations (LQ 1.9), religious organizations (LQ 1.7), farms (LQ 1.7), and gasoline stations (LQ 1.5).

Figure 27 – Top 20 Business Sectors (4-Digit NAICS) and Concentration (LQ), Region of Portage la Prairie, June 2024

| Description | Total Businesses with Employees Region of Portage la Prairie | Location Quotient |
|--|---|----------------------|
| Farms | 73 | 1.7 |
| Unclassified | 36 | 0.8 |
| Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places | 31 | 1.1 |
| Offices of physicians | 24 | 1.0 |
| Religious organizations | 22 | 1.7 |
| Residential building construction | 16 | 0.9 |
| Lessors of real estate | 16 | 1.1 |
| Building equipment contractors | 15 | 1.0 |
| Automotive repair and maintenance | 15 | 1.1 |
| Individual and family services | 12 | 2.0 |
| Child day-care services | 12 | 1.2 |
| Health and personal care stores | 11 | 1.2 |
| Foundation, structure, and building exterior contractors | 11 | 1.2 |
| Accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping and payroll services | 11 | 1.1 |
| Services to buildings and dwellings | 11 | 0.9 |
| Building finishing contractors | 10 | 0.9 |
| General freight trucking | 10 | 0.3 |
| Legal services | 10 | 1.3 |
| Civic and social organizations | 9 | 1.9 |
| Gasoline stations | 9 | 1.5 |

Source: Lightcast, datarun 2024.3 – Canadian Business Counts – Deloitte LLP

Key Takeaways

- As of June 2024, 2,104 businesses were operating in the Region of Portage la Prairie, 1,443 of which were businesses without employees. Of businesses with employees, 49.2% had four or fewer employees.
- The agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (25.6% of total businesses), real estate and rental and leasing (15.1% of total businesses), and construction (7.0% of total businesses) were the sectors with the largest number of businesses in the Region of Portage la Prairie.
- The region has a high concentration of individual and family services (LQ 2.0) and civic and social organizations (LQ 1.9) compared to the province of Manitoba.



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