

Non-profit organizations in rural and small town Canada, 2023

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In 2023, 136,225 non-profit organizations (NPOs) were active across Canada, with 28,892 (21.2%) operating in rural and small town areas (areas located outside census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations) and 107,333 (78.8%) operating in functional urban areas (areas located inside census metropolitan areas or census agglomerations).

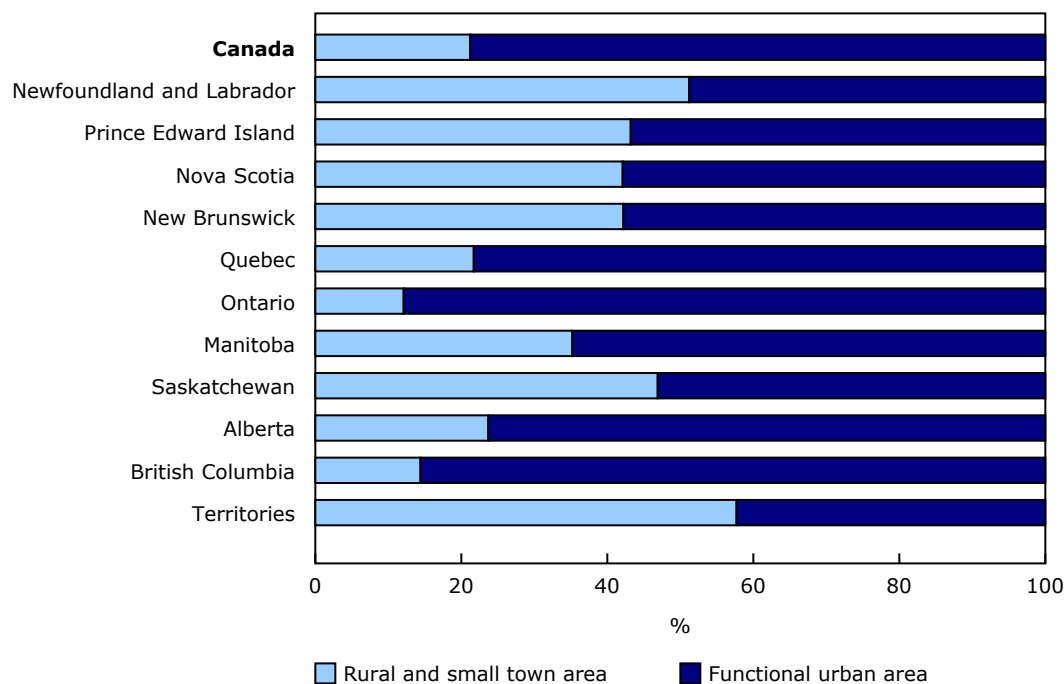
Fewer non-profit organizations operate in rural and small town Canada

In 2023, the number of NPOs in rural and small town Canada declined to 28,892 (-0.4%) compared with the previous year. The largest year-over-year decreases in the number of NPOs in rural and small town areas occurred in the three territories (-3.8%) and Quebec (-2.0%), whereas rural and small town areas in Prince Edward Island (+5.4%) and Alberta (+1.0%) saw the largest increases. NPOs in rural and small town areas of Quebec (24.0%), Ontario (19.5%) and Alberta (12.3%) represented over half (55.8%) of all rural and small town NPOs in Canada.

In functional urban areas, the number of NPOs rose 0.4% from 2022 to 107,333 in 2023. Those in Ontario (38.2%) and Quebec (23.3%) made up over three-fifths (61.5%) of all NPOs in functional urban areas nationwide.

Chart 1

Share of active non-profit organizations in Canada, by province or territories (grouped) and rural and small town area or functional urban area, 2023



Note(s): Shares are calculated as the ratio of the non-profit organization (NPO) count by rural and small town area or functional urban area to the total NPO count by province or territories (grouped). Nunavut does not include a functional urban area.

Source(s): Table 45-10-0108-01.

Revenue declines for non-profit organizations in rural and small town Canada

In 2023, Canadian NPOs generated \$361.3 billion in revenue, up 6.6% from 2022. NPOs in rural and small town areas contributed 7.2% (\$26.1 billion) of this total revenue in 2023, down by 6.2% from the previous year. By contrast, revenues among NPOs in functional urban areas grew by 7.8%, reaching \$335.2 billion in 2023.

From 2022 to 2023, rural and small town NPOs in Newfoundland and Labrador (-79.4%) and Manitoba (-26.6%) saw the largest reductions in revenue, while those in the three territories (+41.7%) saw the strongest gains. In functional urban areas, NPOs in Ontario (+20.5%) and Alberta (+15.6%) saw the strongest gains in revenues, while those in the three territories (-47.0%), Newfoundland and Labrador (-35.6%) and New Brunswick (-21.6%) saw the largest reductions.

Employment decreases in non-profit organizations in rural and small town Canada

In 2023, nearly 3.8 million people were employed by NPOs across Canada, up 0.8% from 2022. Employment in NPOs in rural and small town areas fell by 1.0% year over year to 449,058 in 2023. Declines in employment were greatest in the three territories (-10.9%) and Quebec (-6.2%), while the strongest increases were seen in Manitoba (+3.8%) and Alberta (+3.7%).

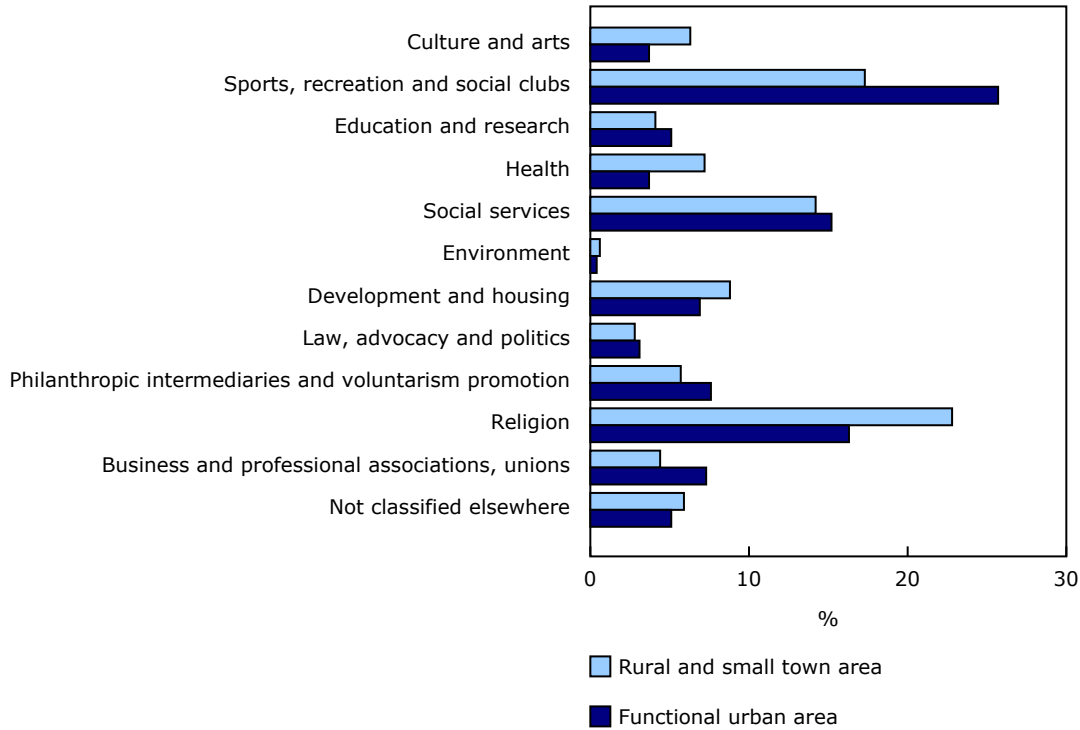
Employment within NPOs in functional urban areas rose by 1.1% from 2022 to 3.3 million in 2023. NPOs in functional urban areas in British Columbia (+6.2%) and Prince Edward Island (+5.5%) recorded the strongest employment growth year over year, while those in New Brunswick (-18.3%) and the three territories (-12.8%) saw the largest declines in employment.

Top activities of non-profit organizations in rural and small town Canada

In rural and small town Canada, the most common non-profit activities in 2023 were religion (22.8%), sports, recreation and social clubs (17.3%) and social services (14.2%). In functional urban areas, sports, recreation and social clubs (25.7%) were the most prevalent activities, followed by religion (16.3%) and social services (15.2%). These trends have remained consistent since 2019, reflecting ongoing priorities for NPOs in both areas.

Chart 2

Share of active non-profit organizations in Canada, by International Classification of Non-Profit Organizations and rural and small town area or functional urban area, 2023



Note(s): Shares are calculated as the ratio of the number of non-profit organizations (NPOs) by activity type according to the International Classification of Non-Profit Organizations (ICNPO) to the total number of NPOs in rural and small town areas or functional urban areas. Data for ICNPO activity group 9, international activities, are not available. For more information, see the Metadata and user guide.

Source(s): Table 45-10-0109-01.

Looking for statistics about rural and small town Canada?

Statistics Canada's [Rural Data Lab](#) brings together data, tools and analyses that showcase Canada's vibrant rural and small town communities and regions. View [Video - Rural Data Lab: Understanding Rural and Small Town Canada Through Data](#) to learn more about the Rural Data Lab.

Note to readers

This analysis draws from the [Rural Canada Non-Profits](#) database, which provides information on the counts, revenue, employment and activities of active non-profit organizations (NPOs) in rural and small town Canada.

The 2023 Rural Canada Non-Profits database is derived from Statistics Canada's Business Register. The Business Register serves as a comprehensive list of businesses in Canada, providing detailed information, including address, non-profit or for-profit status, industry, and Canada Revenue Agency tax filings and tax return data. The Rural Canada Non-Profits database draws on information reported in these data sources. Data availability and coverage may vary from year to year because of updates, revisions or differences in reporting. NPOs retained in the 2023 Rural Canada Non-Profits database were active for all or part of the reference year and reported revenue or employment.

Data are available by geography (Canada, province or territory, census subdivision, rural and small town area or functional urban area), by activity type, in accordance with the [International Classification of Non-Profit Organizations](#), and by industry, based on the [North American Industry Classification System](#).

The geographic classifications at the Canada and provincial or territorial levels are based on Statistics Canada's Standard Geographical Classification (SGC). The [2016 SGC](#) is used for the reference periods from 2019 to 2021. Starting from the 2022 reference period and onward, the [2021 SGC](#) is applied. Rural and small town areas are those outside census metropolitan areas (CMAs) or census agglomerations (CAs). Functional urban areas are those inside CMAs or CAs.

Detailed information can be found in the publication [Rural Canada Non-Profits Metadata and User Guide, 2023](#).

Available tables: [45-10-0107-01](#) to [45-10-0109-01](#) .

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [1105](#) and [5449](#).

The following items are now available on the [Rural Canada Statistics](#) portal:

The infographic, [Non-profit organizations in rural and small town Canada, 2023](#), included in *Statistics Canada – Infographics* ([11-627-M](#)).

The [Rural Canada Non-Profits: Interactive Dashboard](#), included in *Statistics Canada – Data Visualization Products* ([71-607-X](#)).

The [Rural Canada Non-Profits Metadata and User Guide, 2023](#), included in *Statistics Canada – Rural Statistics in Canada* ([45200004](#)).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).