

Youth Mental Health

Mental Health continues to be a challenge in New Brunswick and throughout the country. Young people need to be connected to supportive adult and near-peer relationships during this critical stage of development, and to have opportunities to acquire the skills to overcome life challenges. According to the New Brunswick Health Council, after years of decline, youth mental health appears to show signs of improvement: When looking at the different mental health outcomes reported in the Student Wellness and Education Survey (SWES), a similar pattern emerges from 2015-2016 to 2022-2023:

- The percentage of youth with a high or moderate level of resilience and a high level of mental fitness decreased.
- The percentage of youth who reported having symptoms of anxiety or depression increased.

From 2022-2023 to 2023-2024, the indicators noted above appear to show some signs of improvement.



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Youth Employment

As of November 2024, New Brunswick's youth unemployment rate stood at 10.6%, with 6,100 youth unemployed. This marks a decrease from earlier in the year, indicating positive momentum in youth employment. However, the unemployment rate remains elevated compared to the provincial average, suggesting ongoing challenges in integrating youth into the workforce.

Youth in Southeastern New Brunswick face several obstacles that hinder their employment prospects:

- **Educational Attainment:** Only 41.1% of youth have some post-secondary education or a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or bachelor's degree, compared to 65.2% among the core working-age population.
- **Part-Time Employment:** A significant portion of employed youth (40.2%) work part-time, which may reflect underemployment or limited access to full-time opportunities.
- **Systemic Challenges:** Youth from marginalized communities—including Indigenous, racialized, and disabled individuals—often encounter additional barriers such as discrimination, lack of accessible services, and limited transportation options. ⁴

⁴Source: NB Jobs – New Brunswick Labour Force Statistics
NB Jobs – Labour Market profile of Youth in NB



Integrated Youth Services

IYS Moncton

Integrated Youth Service Hubs (IYS) are viewed nationally and internationally as a better practice for providing a low barrier point of access for youth addictions and mental health supports and services. The concept provides access to services including mental, physical, and sexual health; peer support; social services; academic supports; substance abuse services; and system navigation. IYS hubs are not meant to act as crisis intervention services, but instead serve as the primary access point. There are six IYS sites rolling out across New Brunswick, and in each region there is a lead agency tasked with bringing together the Network of partners, creating governance structures and handling administrative tasks. Thanks in large part to the collaborative success of **YOU Turns**, **United Way** was selected as the lead agency for the IYS site in the Moncton region.

Many of the **YOU Turns** partners have become involved with the IYS site, including three Strategic Partners: **Youth Impact**, with staff from their Family Preservation Program holding office space; **YWCA** Moncton, who offer direct programming in the Drop-In; and **Atlantic Wellness**, who have collaborated on joint grant applications to increase capacity. All three are members of the Core Services Committee which seeks to align delivery of services in the core streams, to increase communication across the various community and government providers, and to identify gaps and opportunities to adapt and strengthen access and delivery based on the experiences of youth using the systems. Additionally, **YWCA** Moncton is delivering Family engagement services one day a week thanks to funding from **United Way's** Building Safer Communities Fund. Other partners such as **Big Brothers Big Sisters** have held Big Little activities in the IYS site, and Portage Atlantic, from their space in the IYS site, recently launched their Moncton Community Care Program for youth with substance use disorder and who may be struggling with mental wellness.



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Youth Employment

Building on work begun through the Communities Building Youth Future (CBYF), United Way has hired a Project Lead for the Youth Employment Skills Strategy (YESS) Partnership. YESS is a Collective Impact, system-wide solution for youth (aged 15 to 30) as they build and act upon plans for their future. The intent is to help youth develop the skills and gain the experience that they need to successfully transition into the labour market. A key to ensuring that the youth employment sector can respond to new and emerging system challenges is by strengthening youth voice in cross-sector partnerships. Part of a Pan-Canadian initiative in six communities, and supported nationally by the Tamarack Institute, each community is contributing to the following overall Project Outputs over three years:

- Development and testing of 30 novel solutions and models that are meant to improve youth skills development and employment
- 5,000 youth access programming to improve their overall skills, employment and education through services that support the whole individual
- Through pre- and post- questionnaires, 4,000 youth (80%) youth report that access to programming/services has improved the outlook towards their career and employment journey after participating in a community program or strategy
- 200 underrepresented youth will have a voice to shape, implement, and / or evaluate community efforts to improve youth skills, youth/employer relationships, and employment success
- 50 youth engaged on local leadership tables
- 150 youth shape, implement, and / or evaluate innovative projects at the community level
- 18 local employers are being engaged and contribute to underrepresented youth outcomes 6 employers and 6 youth participate in the YESS National Collaborative

To maximize the effectiveness of this initiative, it is being integrated with the IYS site in Moncton, providing the opportunity to connect with young people beyond employment paths and respond to a wider range of needs, including Mental Health, Primary Care, Peer Support and overall wellness activities and programming.




Other partners continue to address issues around youth employment, including:

District scolaire francophone sud: The District has had an entrepreneurial model integrated in their curriculum for a number of years. Making a school more entrepreneurial means gradually encouraging children and young people to develop their entrepreneurial spirit and the skills needed to achieve their life and career goals. Students learn to be entrepreneurial by initiating, implementing, and managing projects/initiatives that meet real needs in the school and/or the community.

The District also recognizes that mental health issues and disengagement lead many to leave school before completing their high school education. A survey on student well-being in New Brunswick confirms that half of students attending school report having been affected by anxiety and depression to varying degrees (source: <https://csnb.ca/nouvelles/acces-des-jeunes-aux-services-de-sante-mentale-besoins-et-obstacles-percus>). This situation mainly affects young people with family and personal issues, and makes it difficult for them to function adequately in a traditional school environment. To address it they have alternative education sites that allow students to have more personalized learning and to work at their own pace. They are equally supported by a Social Worker who prepares activities, workshops, individual meetings, and career-related outings to help young people develop skills that promote positive mental health, such as emotion management, communication, and goal achievement. In 2024, 89 participants (81%) were motivated to pursue their Adult High School Diploma (AHDA) or General Education Development (GED), and 83 (72%) had completed at least one course on the path to that goal.



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BGC Moncton: They have several programs that support educational, employment and career paths. Using interactive sessions, networking opportunities, and real-world experiences their Job Readiness Program served 85 clients throughout 2024, providing practical insights and tools to stand out in today's competitive job market. Their Skilled for Success Program supported 12 clients: 5 of whom successfully secured permanent positions, while the others returned to school to further their education.

BGC Dieppe: In **BGC Dieppe's** woodworking program, participants learn essential tool safety and proper usage while getting hands-on experience in measuring, cutting, and assembling wood projects. This is an upriver approach to address the large shortage of skilled trade professionals predicted over the next 10 years. The program was offered to more than 30 youth aged 7-15. Experiences included building simple structures, and understanding the differences in sanding, staining, and various types of wood. This program has opened new doors of opportunity for our youth and will continue to provide them with valuable learning experiences in the future.

YWCA Moncton offers a variety of employment-related programs and services. In 2024, their employment and workforce development initiatives supported 102 individuals, primarily through programs such as Launch Atlantic, Employment My Way, and personalized one-on-one services. These supports were delivered through a combination of group sessions, classes, individual coaching, and workshops. As of July 2025, more than 171 individuals have benefited from these programs and services.



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