



Cornwall Economic Study

Final Report

May 2025

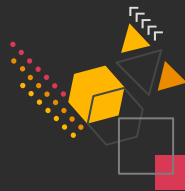
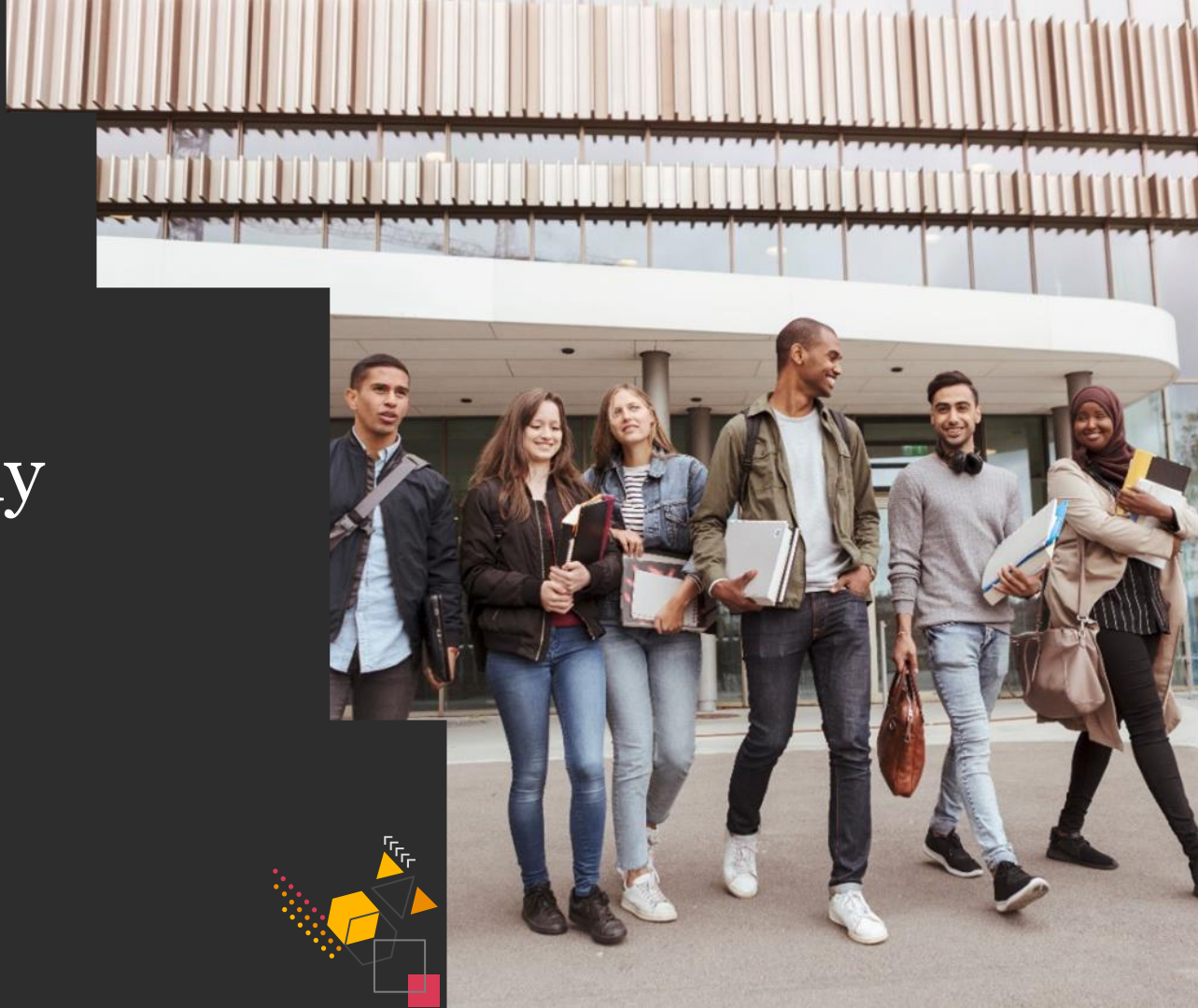
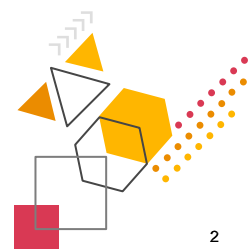


Table of contents

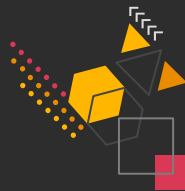


Section		Page #
1	Executive summary	3
2	Methodology and data limitations	9
3	Socioeconomic factors analysis	12
4	Insights from stakeholder consultation	29
5	Case study: Nipissing University	38
6	Conclusion	44
7	Appendices	47





Executive summary



Study context: background and objectives of the study



Study background

In recent years, Cornwall and Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry (SD&G)'s economy has diversified, and its demographic makeup has evolved. To gain an understanding of these changes, the City Council has turned to the University of Ottawa for support to examine the socio-economic trends in the community and identify potential opportunities for economic growth by expanding the number of university-led educational programs available to residents.



Study objectives

The Economics and Policy Practice at PwC Canada has been engaged by the City of Cornwall and the University of Ottawa to conduct a socio-economic and demographic study of the Cornwall and Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry (SD&G) region to understand the current trends, and identify potential areas of opportunity that could influence economic growth in the region. The project will also explore how an academic partnership can advance the areas of opportunity.

This study is separated into three different parts:

- First, we analyzed the socioeconomic and demographic factors;
- Then, we gathered insights from different stakeholders through interviews and engagement sessions;
- Finally, we analyzed a case study with a university to construct a narrative around university programs contributing to the economic potential of Cornwall.



Executive summary: Socioeconomic and demographic factors analysis (1/2)



Population profile

- In 2021, the average age of the population in Ontario was younger (41.8 years) as compared to Cornwall (45 years) and the United Counties (44.7 years).
- From 2016 to 2021, there was an 11.6% rise in the population aged 65 and older in Cornwall, and a 1.0% decrease in the working-age population (15-64 years).
- From 2016-2021, there was a 3.9% decline in the population aged 15-19 years (2,420 to 2,325) and a decline of 13.6% of the population aged 20-24 years (2,830 to 2,445).



Income levels

- In 2021, the average total income of individuals aged 15 years and older in Cornwall was \$41,280, which was 26.7% lower than the Ontario average of \$56,350



Educational levels

- In Cornwall, those who have a bachelor's degree or higher make up 12.4% of the population. In contrast, in Ontario this group comprise 32.3% of the population.
- From 2016-2021, Cornwall has experienced a faster growth in higher educational attainment compared to Ontario.



Wage¹

- Between 2017 and 2022, the median wage for all industries in Cornwall increased by 3.22%, surpassing Ontario's slight decrease of 0.03%. However, despite this higher growth rate, the median wage in Cornwall (\$39,320) remains lower than in Ontario (\$45,660).



Employment levels

- Between 2016 and 2021, Cornwall experienced a slight increase in the number of unemployed individuals. The unemployment rate in Cornwall increased by 2.5 percentage points from 9.9 to 12.4%, while the United Counties saw a smaller rise of 0.6 percentage points to 4.7%. In comparison, Ontario's unemployment rate increased by 4.8 percentage points to 12.2%.
- Cornwall's labour force is mainly concentrated in the following industries: Health care and social assistance (14.6%), Retail trade (13.7%), Manufacturing (10.9%), and Construction (9.5%) accounting for 47.5% of the workforce population. In Ontario, those four industries accounted for 37.5% of the workforce.



Migration²

- Among movers, Cornwall saw a significant increase in people relocating from outside their census area, rising from 30% in 2016 to 43% in 2021.
- In 2021/2022, more people moved into Cornwall (2,767) than moved out (2,233).
- The 2 767 people who moved to Cornwall came primarily from Ottawa-Gatineau (19.2%), Toronto (10.9%), and Montreal (10.1%).

Executive summary: Socioeconomic and demographic factors analysis (2/2)



Knowledge of official languages

- From 2016 to 2021, English speakers increased across all three regions (9.1% in Cornwall, 6.5% in Ontario, and 0.1% in the United Counties).
- During the same period, a decrease in French speakers was observed across all the three regions (-8.8% in Cornwall, -1.8% in Ontario, and about -14.9% in the United Counties).
- The population group that speaks neither English nor French had increased across Cornwall, Ontario, and the United Counties by 41.9%, 5.4%, and 42.9% respectively.



Homeowners and renters

- Compared to Ontario, from 2016 to 2021, the Cornwall region experienced a higher growth in renter-occupied and lower growth owner-occupied households.


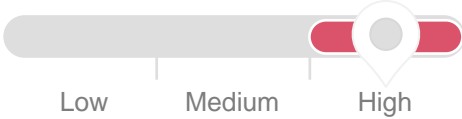
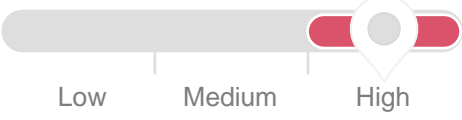


Immigrant status

- From 2016 to 2021, Cornwall experienced an increase in non-immigrants, immigrants as well as non-permanent residents.
- The proportion of immigrant population in Cornwall increased significantly by 20.5%, surpassing the increase in Ontario by 11.3%.
- The most notable increase in Cornwall was the proportion of non-permanent resident population, which increased by almost 300%. Ontario saw a similar trend with an increase of 92.8%. However, the United Counties saw a notable decrease of 55.3%.

Executive summary: Stakeholder consultations



Stakeholder	Interest in the establishment of a university	Explanation
Interviews		Interviews revealed mixed views on establishing a university and on university-led programs in Cornwall. Some stakeholders saw potential for a university to support economic growth by addressing skill shortages and attracting talent. Interviewees identified targeted university programs, particularly in healthcare, engineering, and business leadership, as areas of high potential. Some noted that while these higher-skill roles are important, many immediate gaps in Cornwall's labour market are more aligned with college-level trades-focused programming. Long-term success of establishing a university would depend on addressing broader challenges such as funding needs, and gaps in housing and infrastructure for students and young families.
Have your say platform		The results from the Have Your Say platform underscored the demand for expanded post-secondary programs (at both college and university level). Respondents most frequently identified needs in healthcare, technical fields, and the skilled trades, along with significant interest in professional development courses and micro-credential offerings. However, some respondents stressed the importance of addressing pressing issues related to housing and fostering collaboration among different stakeholders before prioritizing new educational programs.
Citizen engagement session		During the citizen engagement session, the discussion highlighted that establishing a post-secondary institution could significantly boost the region's appeal, economic growth, and educational needs. Participants emphasized the necessity for the city to adopt higher density developments and reduce housing restrictions to make living more affordable, which would attract people and businesses alike. Programs should be developed based on the actual needs of organizations, whether at the college or university level.

Executive summary: Case study



Economic impact

- Nipissing University's operational expenditures contributed \$154.1 million to Ontario's GDP and supported over 1,100 full-time equivalent jobs in 2016-17.
- Other than direct impacts from operational expenditures, non-local students and friends/visitor spending also added \$46.2 million to North Bay's economy.
- Over five years, capital investments created 147 full-time equivalent jobs, contributing \$14.3 million to the province's GDP.



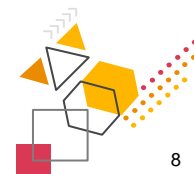
Social and community impact

- Strong community engagement through initiatives like the Biidaaban Community Service-Learning Program and volunteer efforts by students and staff.
- Tailored academic programs in nursing, criminal justice, and social work helped meet local labor shortages and foster community development.
- Collaborations with Indigenous communities and local colleges, like Canadore College, enhanced human capital development.



Potential impacts for Cornwall

- Establishing a university could bring substantial economic benefits (i.e. similar to Nipissing's \$123 million¹ direct contribution to North Bay's economy), through student spending, local employment, and infrastructure development.
- Partnerships with local industries and institutions could drive innovation in sectors such as healthcare and agri-tech, making Cornwall more attractive to such emerging industries.
- As demonstrated by Nipissing University, a university in Cornwall could create employment opportunities by addressing skill gaps and supporting workforce development through co-op and internship programs aligned with regional needs.





Methodology and data limitations



Methodology and data limitations



Throughout this report, we present three different geographies for the socioeconomic analysis as follows:

1. Cornwall as a Census Subdivision (CSD);
2. The United counties (excluding Cornwall) as a Census Division (CD), including Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry and Akwesasne territory in Ontario; and
3. The province of Ontario, to provide a benchmark for comparison.

Note that the Mohawks territory of Akwesasne covers geographical areas covering Ontario, Quebec and the North of the state of New York. However, due to data limitations, the Mohawk territory of Akwesasne in parts of Quebec and New York has been excluded from the analysis.

Data has been collected from Statistics Canada's publicly available sources (2016 and 2021 Censuses, Preliminary T1 Family Tax File, and Annual Demographic Estimates: Sub-provincial Areas).

Acknowledging the potential impact of COVID-19 on the 2021 Census, Statistics Canada has implemented several measures to ensure the reliability of the data. These measures include adapting their data collection process to contactless methods, which helped achieve higher response rates, and introducing new quality indicators. These indicators, such as total non-response rates (TNR) and imputation rates for each question, aim to improve data quality. Additionally, they utilized alternative data sources and timely COVID-19 data from other surveys to provide insights on the pandemic's impact.

For more information on Statistics Canada data reliability, please visit:

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/98-304/2021001/app-ann1-4-eng.cfm>

To further check the reliability of the data gathered from Statistics Canada, we utilized the available figures from the Eastern Ontario economic region. We found that the unemployment rates for the specified period closely matched those reported in the Censuses, confirming the consistency of the data.

Methodology and data limitations



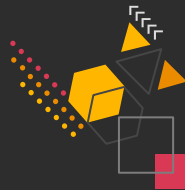
The second part of this report synthesizes insights from stakeholders in Cornwall, the United Counties, and Akwesasne. To gather this information, we employed three distinct methods:

1. **Interviews:** We have conducted two rounds of interviews for a total of twenty-four interviews with a select group of stakeholders to gain in-depth perspectives.
2. **Online Platform:** Utilizing the "Have Your Say" platform, the City of Cornwall engaged citizens over a four-weeks period to collect their input. Two different surveys were administered, one for the residents and one for the small businesses owner.
3. **Engagement Sessions:** In September, the City of Cornwall organized one citizen engagement sessions to facilitate direct dialogue and feedback.

To capture and ensure accurate and efficient documentation, we used our AI transcription tools during this process.



Socioeconomic and demographic factors analysis



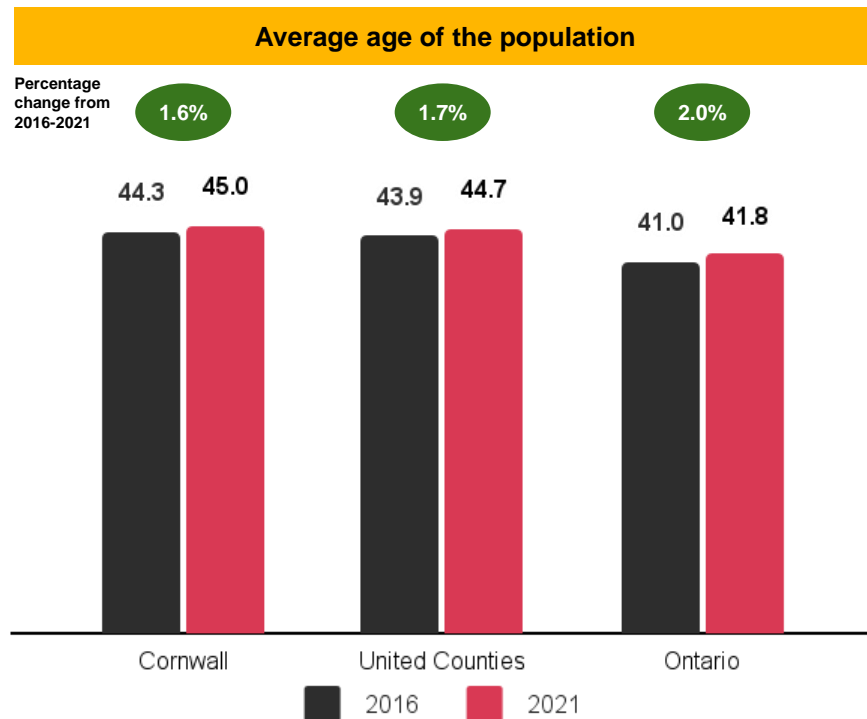
Overall demographic trends

Key insights on overall demographic trends:

Between 2016 and 2021, the total population in Cornwall and the United Counties grew by 1.1% (from 113,429 to 114,637), a rate significantly lower than Ontario's growth of 5.8% (from 13,448,494 to 14,223,942). In terms of the average age of the population in 2021 (shown in the graph to the right), Ontario has a younger population than both Cornwall and its neighbouring United Counties. It is important to note that while Cornwall's average population is older than Ontario's, the gap has shrunk slightly from 2016 to 2021. From 2016 to 2021, the average age increased across the three geographic areas considered.

To better understand the population growth trends, we broke down the population by age groups on the next slide (pg. 7). Key observations include:

- From 2016 to 2021, the number of people aged 65 and above increased in all three regions. Cornwall experienced a relatively moderate increase of 11.6% compared to the neighbouring United Counties (13.6%) and Ontario (17.1%).
- Between 2016 and 2021, both Cornwall and the United Counties saw a decline in their working-age population (ages 15-64), with decreases of 1.0% and 4.5%, respectively, in contrast to a 3.8% increase in Ontario (see **Appendix A** for a breakdown of working-age population).
- From 2016 to 2021, the most significant decline within the working-age population (ages 15-64) in both Cornwall and the United Counties was among those aged 50-54 years, with a drop of 25.1% and 24.2% respectively.



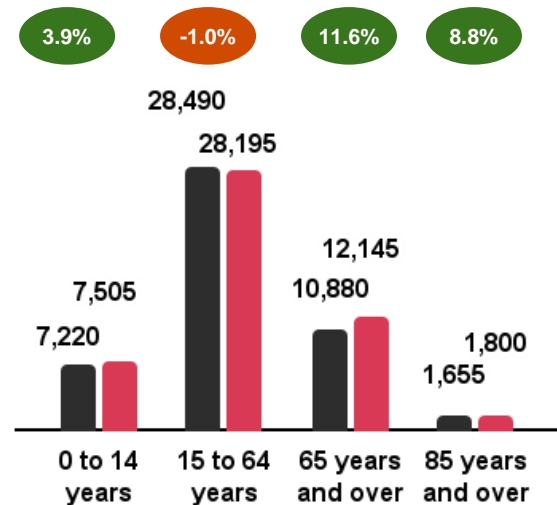
Source: Statistics Canada, Censuses 2016 and 2021; PwC Analysis

Population breakdown by age group

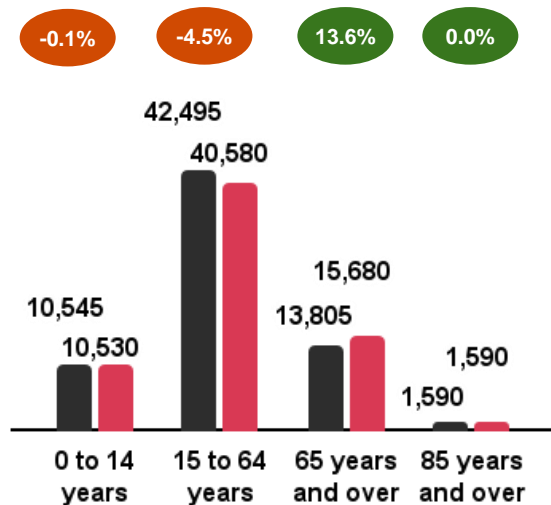


Breakdown of population by broad age groups

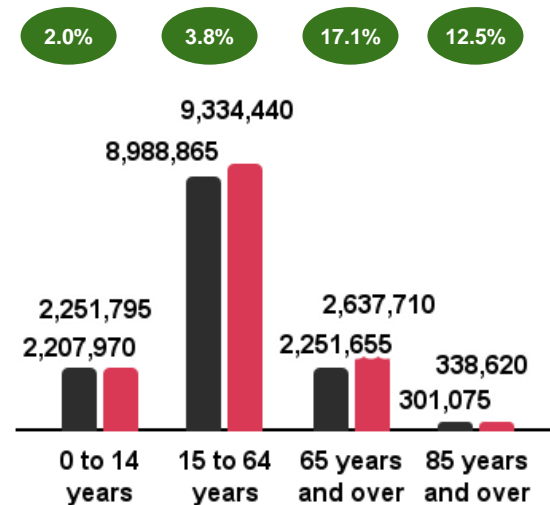
% change (2016-2021)



Cornwall



United Counties



Ontario

2016 2021

Highschool graduates predominate in Cornwall

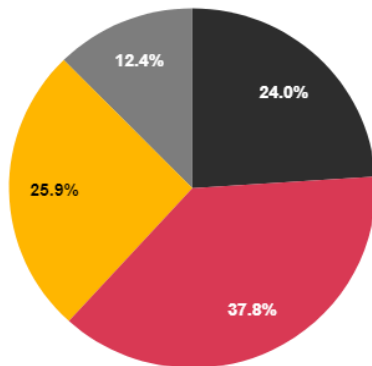


The chart below provides a breakdown of the highest levels of education attained by the population in Cornwall (in 2021), compared to Ontario and the United Counties.

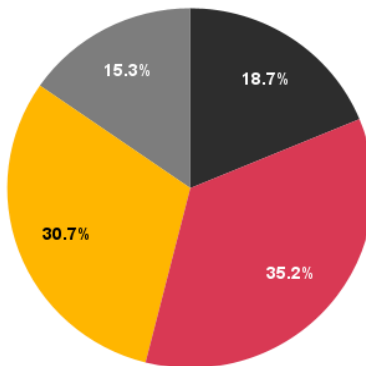
- Notably, the largest educational group in Cornwall (37.8%) comprises those who hold a secondary or high school diploma, compared to those with a college degree (25.9%), a bachelor's degree (12.4%) or no certificate (24.0%).
- In contrast, in Ontario, the largest group (32.3%) consist of individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher.
- The proportion of people with no certificate/diploma is higher in Cornwall (24.0%) compared to the United Counties (18.7%) and Ontario (16.5%).

Breakdown by highest levels of certification, 2021 census

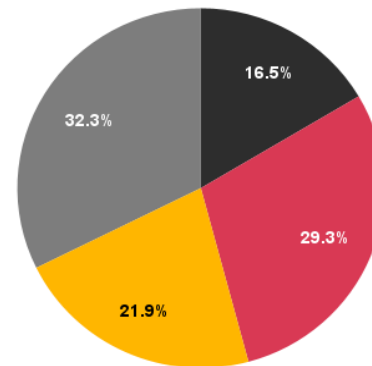
Cornwall (2021)



United Counties (2021)



Ontario (2021)



Source: Statistics Canada, Censuses 2016 and 2021; PwC Analysis



No certificate or diploma



Secondary/High school diploma



College or other non-university diploma

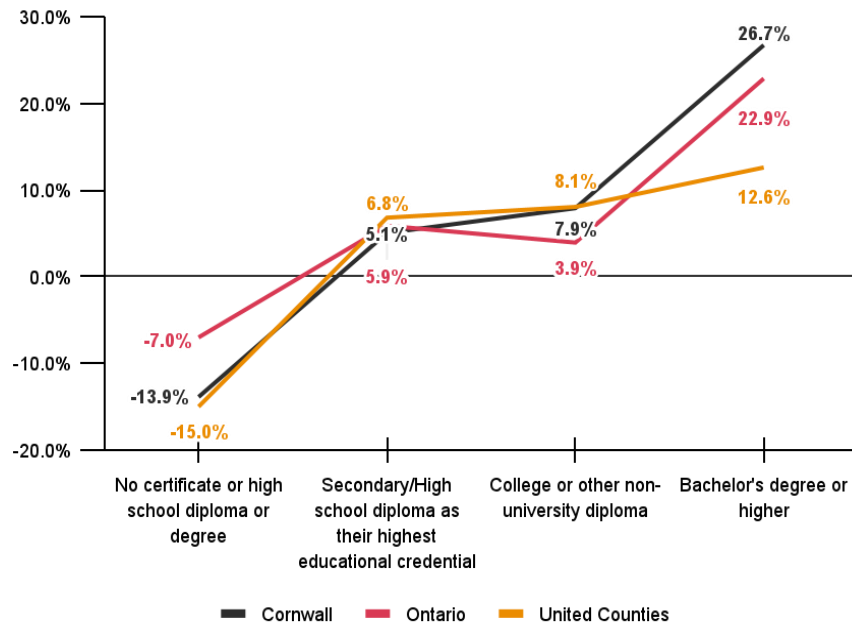


Bachelor's degree or higher

Overall increase in educational attainment of advanced degrees

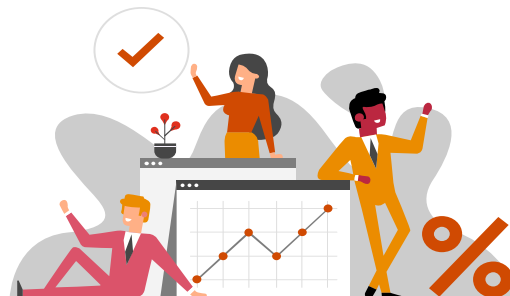


Percentage change in educational attainment (2016-2021)



Source: Statistics Canada, Censuses 2016 and 2021; PwC Analysis

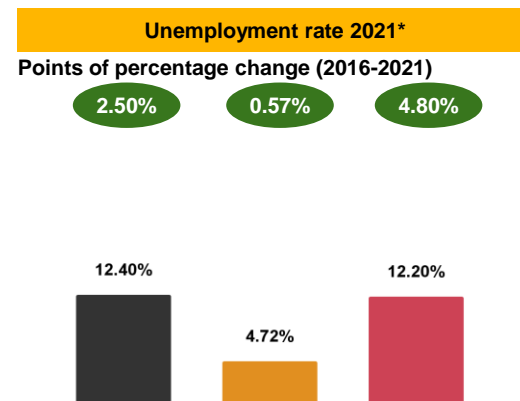
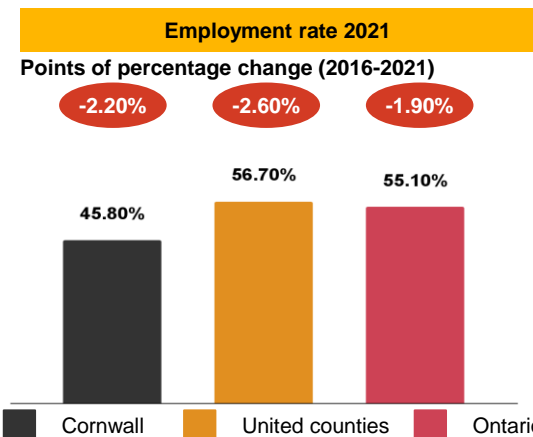
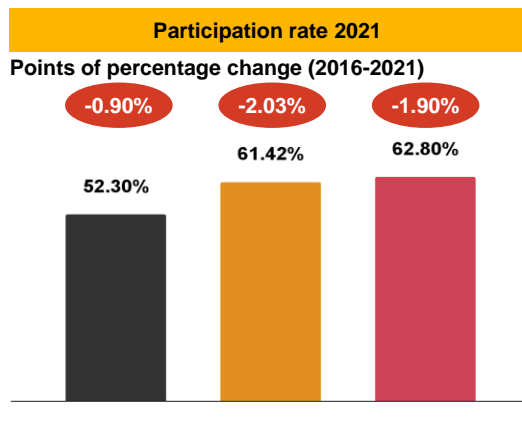
- From 2016 to 2021, Cornwall has shown a significant increase in the attainment of higher education, with an increase of 26.7% in recent years, compared to 22.9% in Ontario and 12.6% in the United Counties.
- The percentage of people with no degree or diploma has decreased across all regions. Notably, Cornwall saw a decrease of 13.9%, and the United Counties experienced a 15.0% reduction, both surpassing the provincial decrease of 7.0%.



Cornwall experienced an increase unemployment rate between 2016 and 2021



- From 2016 to 2021, the number of unemployed individuals in Cornwall increased, a part of this could be due to the effects of COVID-19.
- The unemployment rate in Cornwall rose by 2.5 percentage points from 9.9 to 12.4%. In contrast, the United Counties experienced a more modest increase of 0.6 percentage points to 4.7%. Meanwhile, Ontario saw its unemployment rate jumped up by 4.8 percentage points to 12.2%.
- Though Cornwall experienced a smaller increase in its unemployment rate in 2021, this figure is, in fact, the largest among the three regions (12.40%). This is followed by Ontario (12.20%) and the United Counties (4.72%).
- Cornwall experienced a modest reduction in its participation rate, decreasing by 0.9 percentage points from 53.2% to 52.3%. This decline was smaller compared to Ontario's reduction of 1.9 percentage points (62.80%) and the United Counties' decrease of 2.03 percentage points (61.42%). Despite the lowest decrease, Cornwall is the area with the lowest participation rate.



*Due to data limitations, the unemployment rate in Cornwall may be overestimated in the last census. For example, the Labor Force survey estimates the unemployment rate at 8.3%. However, as no data was estimated for the United Counties, we are presenting the data from the census instead.

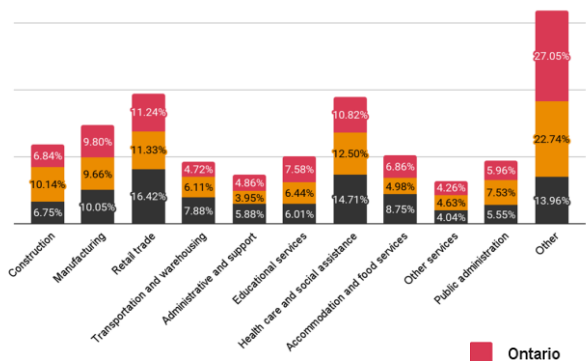
Source: Statistics Canada, Censuses 2016 and 2021; PwC Analysis

Four industries accounted for over 50% of Cornwall's workforce

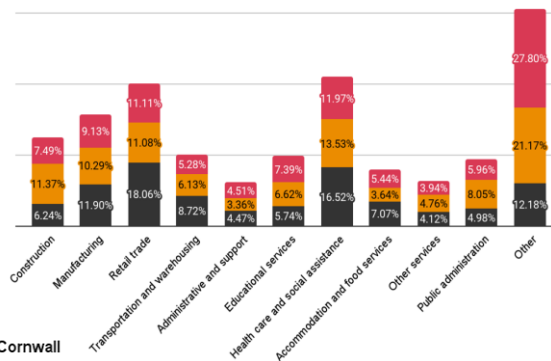


- In 2021, over 50% of Cornwall's workforce was concentrated in four key industries. Between 2016 and 2021 they grew to concentrate more employees: Manufacturing (+1.85 percentage points), Health Care and Social Assistance (+1.82 percentage points), Retail Trade (+1.65 percentage points), and Transportation and Warehousing (+0.84 percentage points).
- Compared to the United Counties, Cornwall's Transportation and Warehousing industry employs twice the percentage of workers.
- In contrast, Ontario's workforce is more evenly distributed across a variety of industries, unlike the concentration seen in Cornwall's primary sectors.

Percentage of workforce by industry (2016)



Percentage of workforce by industry (2021)

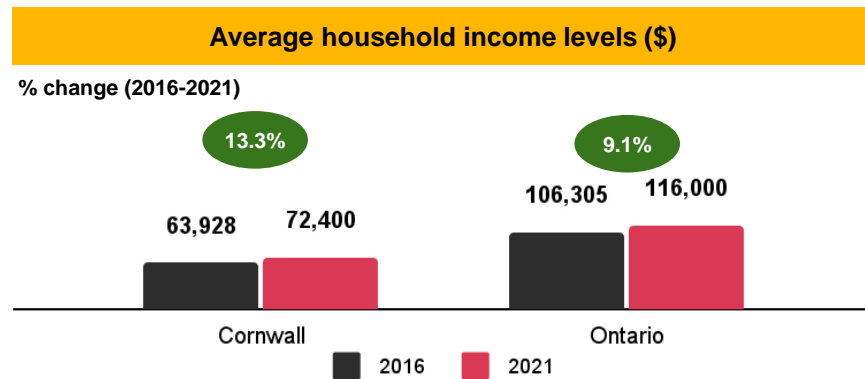
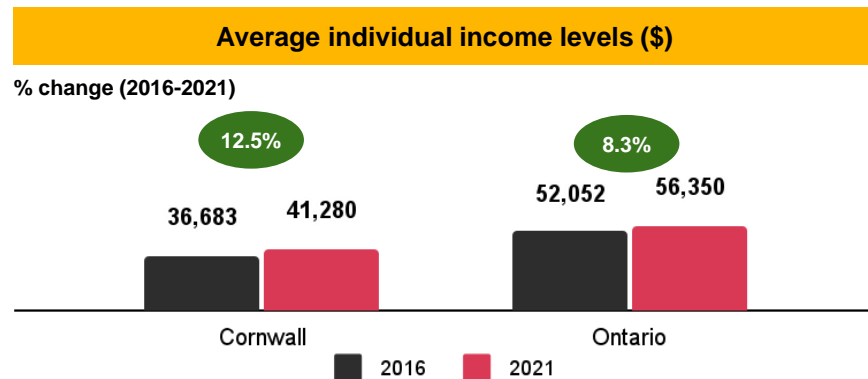


The "Other services" category includes sectors primarily focused on performing repairs or routine maintenance on motor vehicles, machinery, equipment, and other products to ensure their efficient operation. It also encompasses establishments providing personal care, funeral, laundry, and other individual services such as pet care and photo finishing. Additionally, it involves entities that organize and promote religious activities, support various causes through grant-making, advocate for social and political causes, and defend the interests of their members. Private households fall under this sector as well.

The "Other" category includes the following industries: Agriculture, Mining, Utilities, Wholesale trade, Information and cultural industries, Finance and insurance, Real estate, Professional, scientific and technical services, Management of companies and enterprises, Arts, entertainment and recreation.

Source: Statistics Canada, Censuses 2016 and 2021; PwC Analysis

Lower income levels in Cornwall despite higher growth rates



To analyze income levels in Cornwall, we examined average individual and household incomes:

- Compared to the provincial average, in 2021, the average total income of individuals aged 15 years and older in Cornwall was \$41,280, which is 26.7% lower than the Ontario average of \$56,350.
- Compared to the provincial average, in 2021, the average household income in Cornwall was \$72,400, which is 37.6% lower than the Ontario average of \$116,000.
- Despite Cornwall having lower income levels, the region experienced higher growth in average income (both individual and household) compared to Ontario.
 - From 2016 to 2021, the average income of individuals in Cornwall increased by 12.5%, surpassing the income growth in Ontario (8.3%).
 - Similarly, from 2016 to 2021, the average household income in Cornwall increased by 13.3%, while in Ontario it increased by 9.1%.

The real median employment compensation* changes differ across the industries



Changes in median employment compensation between 2017 and 2022



* Including wages, salaries and commissions

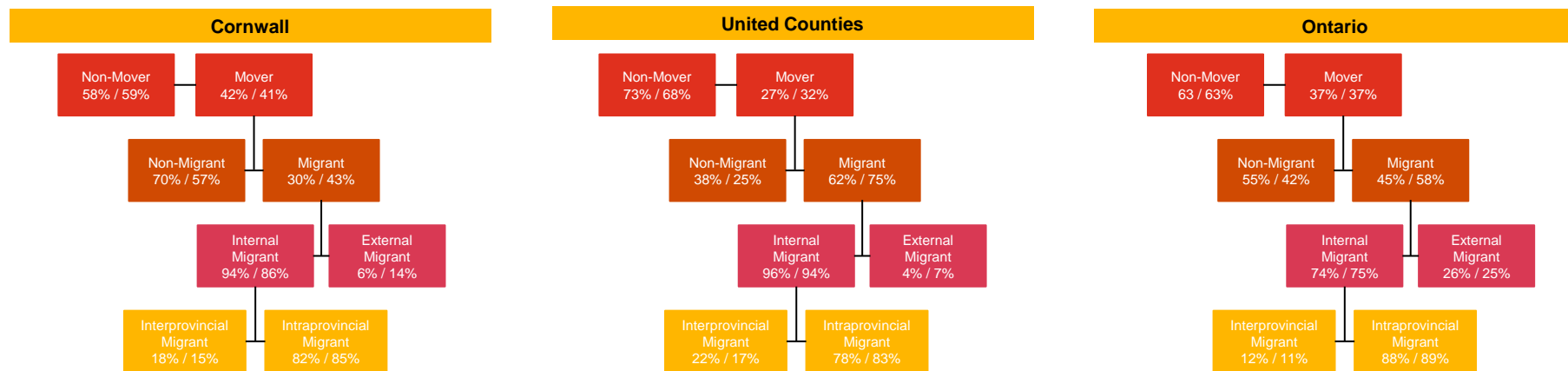
** For this industry, the median employment compensation change is between 2019 and 2022 due to data limitation
 Note: Changes for each industry are presented in **Appendix B**, the analysis is based on the five last years available,
 Source: Statistics Canada, Income and Financial Data of Individuals, Preliminary T1 Family File; PwC Analysis

- In Cornwall's main employment sectors, the real median compensation increased slightly in Manufacturing (+1.93%) and Retail Trade (+1.03%) sectors. However, there were declines in Health Care and Social Assistance (-0.32%) and Transportation and Warehousing (-3.50%) sectors.
- In Cornwall, changes in median employment compensation across various industries differed from those in Ontario. Notably, the sectors of Construction, Accommodation and Food Services, and Other Services saw increases that were 2.6 to 4.5 times greater in Cornwall compared to the province. For instance, the Construction industry in Cornwall experienced a significant rise in median employment compensation by 1.93%, whereas in Ontario, it saw a decrease of 3.72%.
- We observed a significant drop in Administrative and support, Education services, and Public administration for Cornwall, and almost no variation in Health care and social assistance (-0.32%). In particular, we note the largest drop in Administrative and support (-11.00%) for Cornwall, whereas it increased in Ontario (+1.94%).

Migration trends vary across the three regions



- Among the number of movers, Cornwall saw a significant increase in people relocating from outside its census area, rising from 30% to 43% between 2016 and 2021. The majority of these new residents came from within Canada, mainly from within the province. However, the proportion of international migrants more than doubled, increasing from 6% in 2016 to 14% in 2021.
- Interestingly, the United Counties have twice the proportion of people relocating from outside their census areas compared to Cornwall. Most of these new residents come from within Canada and from the same province.
- Ontario experienced a significantly higher proportion of people moving in from outside of Canada, with about 25% of new residents coming from abroad.



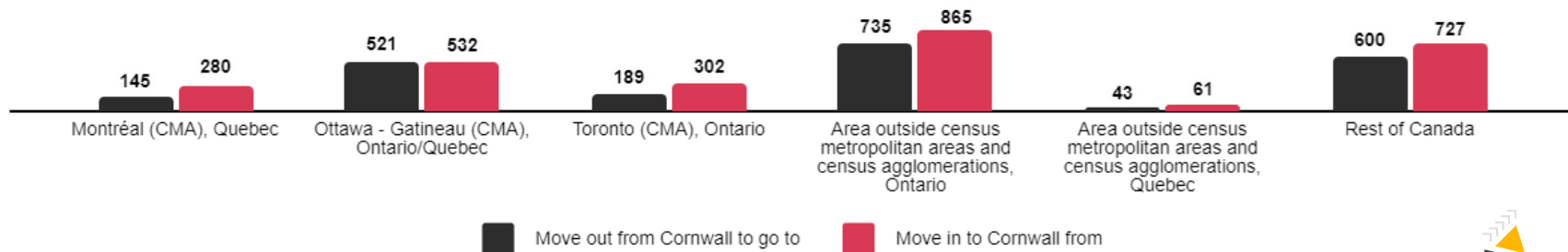
Note: 2016% / 2021%. Definitions can be found in **Appendix D**.
Source: Statistics Canada, Censuses 2016 and 2021; PwC Analysis

More people are moving into Cornwall than leaving

In 2021/2022, the migration balance was positive, with 2,767 people moving in and 2,233 moving out.

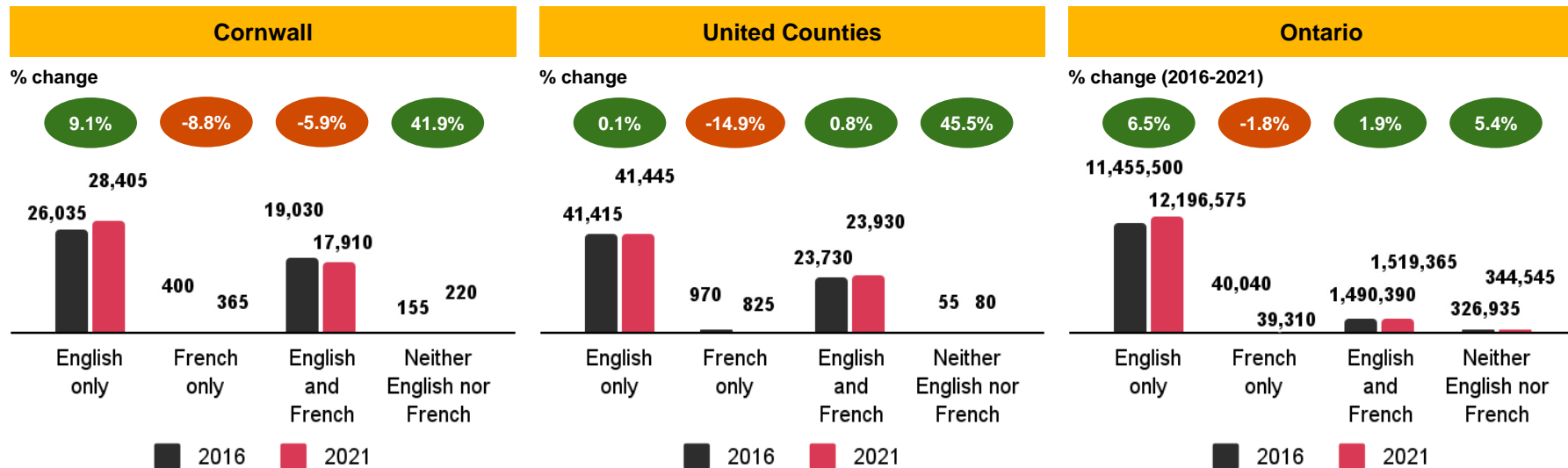
- Newcomers primarily came from the census metropolitan area (CMA) of Ottawa-Gatineau (19.2%), Toronto (10.9%), and Montreal (10.1%).
- Cornwall observed a positive net migration with these CMAs, with 1.9 times more people moving to Cornwall from Toronto and 1.6 times more from Montreal than those leaving Cornwall for these cities.

Cornwall Migration 2021/2022



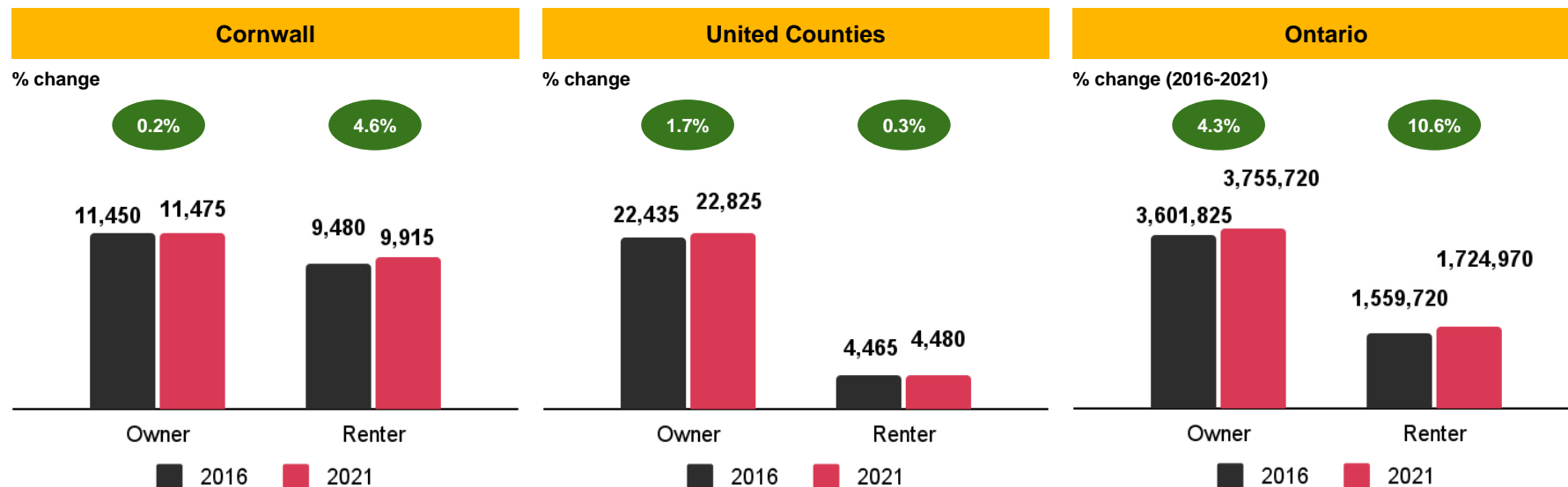
Source: Statistics Canada, Annual Demographic Estimates : Sub Provincial Areas; PwC Analysis

Growing diversity in non-English/French speakers



- In Cornwall, from 2016 to 2021, the population that speaks only English increased by 9.1%, while in Ontario this group grew by 6.5% and slightly in the United Counties by 0.1%.
- At the same time the population that speaks only French in Cornwall decreased by 8.8%, which is comparable to a similar trend in Ontario where this group decreased by 1.8%. In the United Counties, this group saw a larger decrease of about 15%.
- The number of people who are bilingual (English and French) in Cornwall decreased by 5.9%, whereas Ontario saw a slight increase of 1.9%.
- The population that speaks neither English nor French in Cornwall increased significantly by 41.9%. A similar trend was also observed in Ontario with a 5.4% increase.

An increase in renters compared to homeowners in Cornwall



Overall, Cornwall and the United Counties exhibit moderate changes in both renters and owners compared to Ontario. The Cornwall region experienced a relatively higher growth in renter-occupied than in owner occupied households.

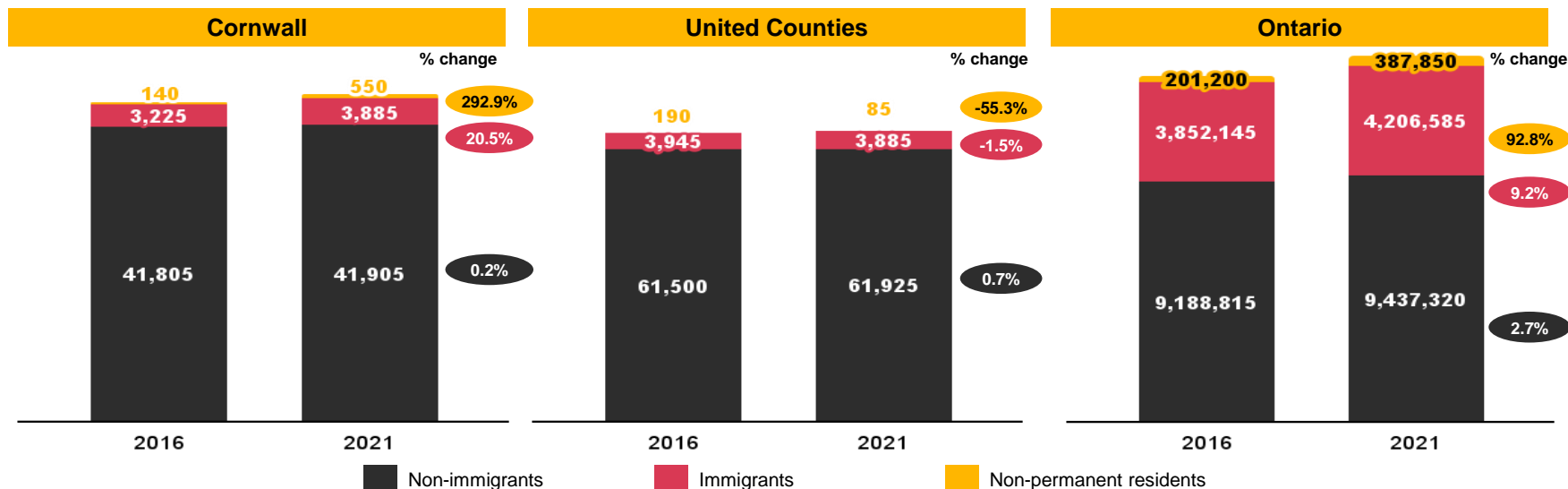
- The number of owner-occupied households in Ontario increased by 4.3%, whereas Cornwall saw a marginal increase of 0.2%, and the United Counties experienced a slightly higher increase of 1.7%.
- Renter-occupied households in Ontario grew by 10.6%, whereas in Cornwall and United Counties, the increase was moderate, with 4.6% and 0.3%, respectively.

Influx of non-permanent residents and immigrants in Cornwall



- The graphs below show the changes (from 2016 to 2021) in non-immigrants, immigrants and non-permanent residents in the three regions. Overall, from 2016 to 2021, Cornwall experienced a significant increase in the number of immigrants as well as non-permanent residents.
- The proportion of immigrant population in Cornwall increased significantly by 20.5%, compared to an overall increase of 9.20% in Ontario. In contrast, the United Counties experienced a slight decrease of 1.5%.
- The non-permanent resident population surged dramatically in Cornwall by almost 300%, and in Ontario by 92.8%, whereas the United Counties saw a notable decrease of 55.3%.

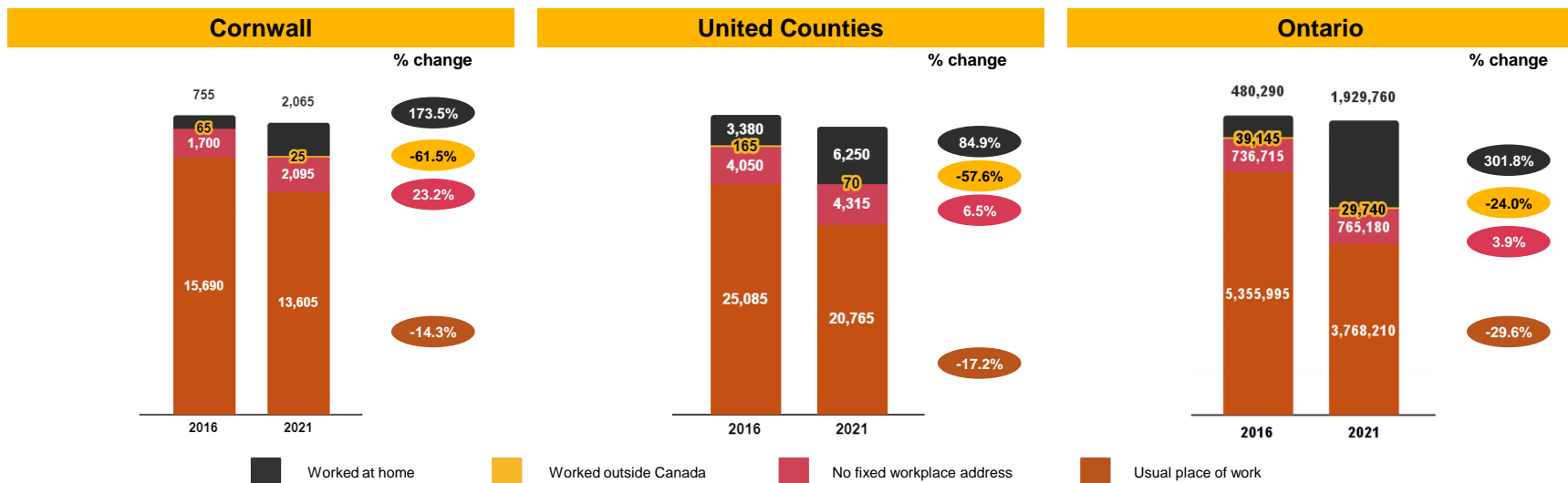
Note: Immigrant includes persons who are, or who have ever been, landed immigrants or permanent residents. Non-immigrant includes persons who are Canadian citizens by birth. Non-permanent residents includes persons from another country who have a work or study permit or who are refugee claimants.



A significant rise in the number of remote workers



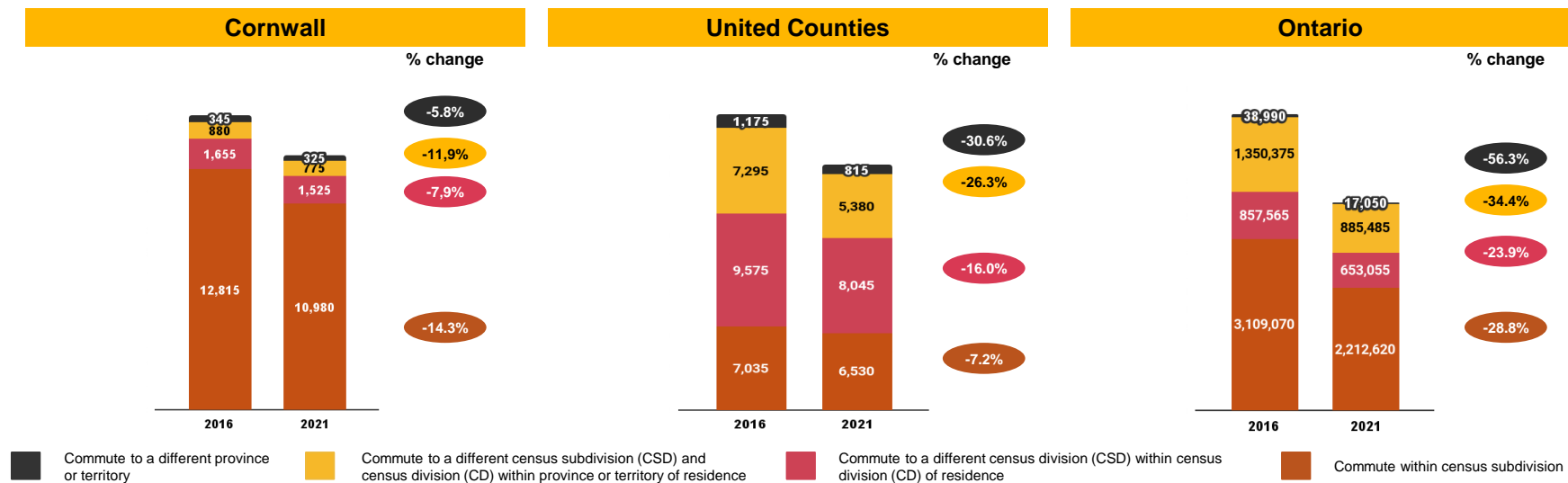
- Between 2016 and 2021, there was a noticeable increase in the number of individuals working from home across three geographical regions. This rise, captured during the 2021 census amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, may potentially overstate the actual shift in work habits. Concurrently, there was a decline in the number of people working at their usual place of work.
- Specifically, in Cornwall, the number of people working from home surged from 755 to 2,065, marking a significant increase of 173.5%, which is the second-largest rise following Ontario's 301.8% increase. Conversely, the United Counties experienced a notable increase of 84.9% in the number of people working from home, which, while lower than other regions, still represents a significant rise.



There has been a decrease in the number of individuals commuting to their workplaces



- From 2016 to 2021, there was a decline in the number of employees commuting to their workplaces across the three geographic regions, with a particularly sharp decrease observed in Ontario (-29,7%) followed by the United Counties (-17,2%) and Cornwall (-13,3%).
- In Cornwall, the majority of commuters, accounting for 80.7% of the total, traveled within the census subdivision. This group numbered 10,980 workers and saw a reduction of 14.3% over the period analyzed.



Our hypotheses



Impact of newcomers to Cornwall on labour force participation

We observe an overall increase in population growth in Cornwall, driven in part by immigrants and non-permanent residents. This influx potentially includes individuals who are not of working age and are not participating in the labor force, contributing to the observed decline in the labor participation rate.

Work status

Some non-permanent residents are unable to participate in the labour force due to being on student visas or being of senior age group.

Language barrier

In Cornwall, the population group that does not speak English or French has also grown, likely due to an increase in immigrants and non-permanent residents. However, the increase is small compared to the total population. Therefore the effect on the labor force evolution is limited.

Home ownership

We have also observed an increase in renter-occupied households compared to owner-occupied ones. This trend is likely due to the rise in non-permanent residents and immigrants who may prefer renting rather than purchasing a home immediately upon arrival

Note: Both our hypotheses is based on the census data from 2016 and 2021.

PwC



Migration and newcomers likely influence educational attainment and income growth

Increase in educational attainment

Cornwall's rising educational attainment levels are likely influenced by migration trends. An increasing number of people from Toronto, Montréal, and Ottawa, who typically hold higher diplomas, have been moving to Cornwall.

Increase in newcomers to Cornwall with jobs

In 2021, the number of Cornwall residents commuting to work decreased (both within and outside Cornwall, and to other provinces and territories), and the number working from home increased significantly. This supports the idea that more educated individuals from larger cities are relocating to Cornwall for its lower cost of living and the ability to work remotely.

Income growth

We observe higher income growth in Cornwall, which may be tied to the increase in remote work. This growth could potentially be influenced by individuals working from home and earning higher wages from jobs based in larger CMAs, such as Toronto, rather than solely by local industries.

With more than double the number of people reporting working from home in 2021, this trend could contribute to wage growth that does not necessarily reflect the economic growth of local industries.



Insights from stakeholder consultations: Interviews, Have Your Say platform, and citizen engagement session

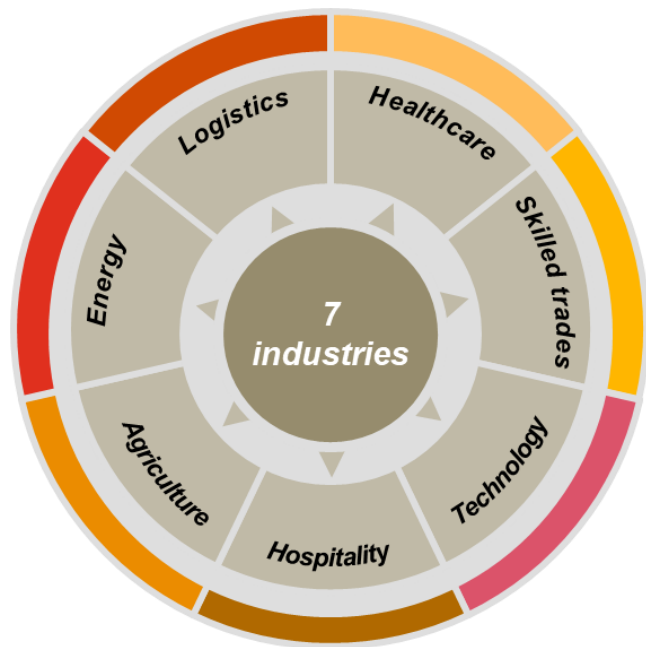


Seven industries were highlighted by the interviewees



During our interviews, seven industries were mentioned several times:

- **Logistics and supply chain management**, which is well connected to the existing distribution centers and the strategic location of the region
- **Healthcare**, especially nursing, Personal Support Worker, paramedic, and extended healthcare, which are facing shortages and retirements
- **Skilled trades**, especially millwright, mechanic, truck and coach, and carpentry, which are in high demand and have potential for expansion
- **Technology**, especially IT, computer programming, and game programming, which could attract remote workers and support the bigger industries
- **Tourism and hospitality**, especially related to the Saint Lawrence Parks Commission and the historical and cultural attractions
- **Energy**, especially renewable sources such as hydroelectricity, battery and wind farms
- **Agriculture and food processing**, especially cheese production and research and development



Six advantages were mentioned by the interviewees



Location

- The region boasts proximity to major hubs and markets, including Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and the state of New York, making it a strategic location for commerce.
- Connectivity is further enhanced by two major highways that traverse the area.
- Additionally, the region's access to the Saint Lawrence River presents a unique advantage for facilitating trade.



Availability of resources

- Land in the region is affordably priced, providing an attractive opportunity for new businesses.
- Electricity, sourced from Hydro-Québec, is environmentally friendly and also more cost-effective compared to other regions in Ontario.
- The area benefits from an abundant water supply, ensuring resources for industrial and agricultural

PwC needs.



Cost of living

- The cost of living in this region is more economical compared to other areas in Eastern Ontario.
- Housing is notably more affordable, offering a cost-effective option for homebuyers.
- Additionally, land and electricity costs are reasonably priced, contributing to the overall affordability of the region.



Bilingual workforce

- The region hosts a bilingual workforce, and with services available in both official languages.
- The possibility to work in both languages is appealing to both English and French-speaking communities.



Existing industries

- The region is home to well-established industries, including logistics, agriculture, and manufacturing.
- It also boasts a significant concentration of supply chain and logistics expertise.



Existing programs

- The educational programs offered in the region are tailored to meet local demands, with specialized courses in nursing, logistics, and project management that are designed to address the specific needs of the community.
- The different education organization (St Lawrence College, Iohahi:io) offer programs to address the needs of the workforce.

Eight challenges could impact the future growth of the area



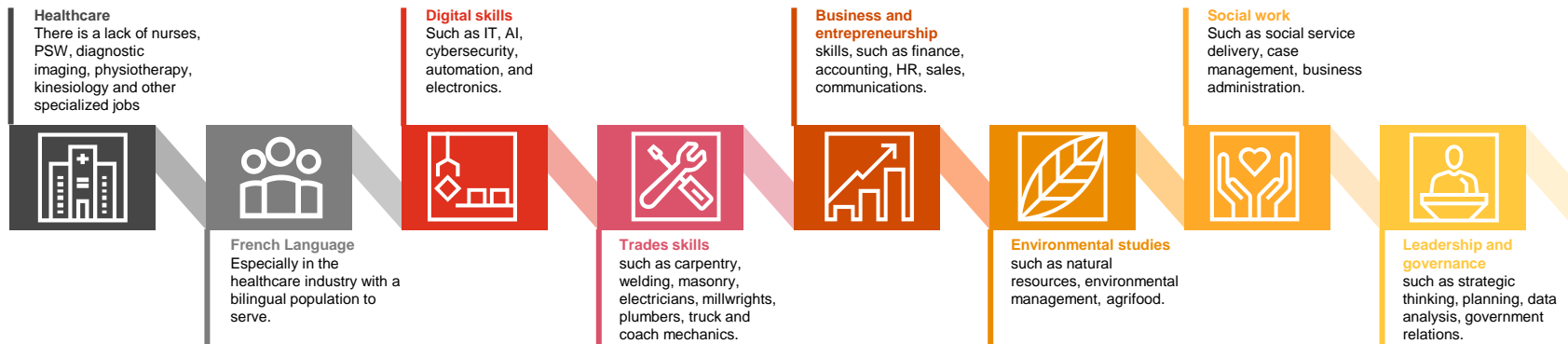
Key skill gaps identified by stakeholders



The participants expressed various challenges that they face in their professional recruitment, such as skill shortages, talent retention, and brain drain. They also highlighted some of the factors that affect their recruitment, such as the lack of housing, doctors, and amenities in the area which could continue to affect their ability to attract and retain workers and newcomers.

While some immediate skill gaps in Cornwall's labour market (e.g. trades) are more aligned with college-level programming, several interviewees emphasized that targeted university-led programs could also address higher-skilled workforce shortages and support longer-term economic growth. Fields such as engineering, healthcare (e.g., pharmacy, diagnostic imaging, physiotherapy), business leadership, and advanced logistics and automation were cited as areas of particular need. Interviewees also suggested that expanding university-level options would provide more choice for students and employers, and help attract and retain skilled workers in the region. A future institution could support these goals by offering expanded MBA programs, micro-credential programs, co-op placements, and industry partnerships tailored to local workforce needs.

Skills lacking in the organization



Mixed views toward establishing a university and university-led programs in the region



The views expressed in the interviews on opening a post-secondary institution in the area were diverse and nuanced, reflecting the different perspectives and interests of the stakeholders. Some of the main points that were raised are:

- The establishment of a university could provide more opportunities for higher education and skill development in the region, which is currently underserved by the existing institutions and faces various challenges in professional recruitment and retention.
- Many interviewees viewed a university presence as a long-term opportunity to support economic growth, expand local access to higher education, and attract or retain talent - particularly in high-skill fields such as healthcare (pharmacy, diagnostic imaging, physiotherapy), engineering, cybersecurity, entrepreneurship/business leadership (e.g. MBA programs), and automation.
- A university would need to carefully consider the types and levels of programs or courses that it offers, to align with the needs and gaps of the local labor market, to avoid duplication or overlap with the existing programs, and to ensure relevance and quality for the students and employers. Some interviewees proposed a hybrid or satellite model with targeted university programs.
- A university would need to consult with the various stakeholders from different sectors, such as healthcare, trades, logistics, business, technology, environmental studies, social work, French language services, leadership and governance, etc., to understand their specific needs and expectations, and to establish partnerships and collaborations that would benefit both the institution and the community.
- There was strong interest in industry-academic partnerships, with interviewees emphasizing the value of co-op placements, applied research, micro-credentials, and leadership development programs to align education with Cornwall's evolving workforce needs.

At the same time, some stakeholders - particularly in the public sector - raised concerns about the sustainability of a university in the region, citing low local demand, limited student base, funding needs, and housing or infrastructure gaps that could affect viability.

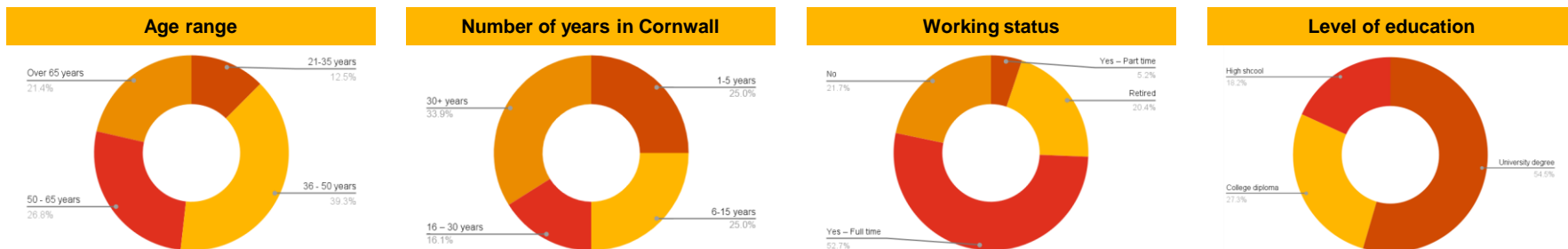
Demographics of participants of Have Your Say platform



The surveys on the Have Your Say platform were completed by a total of 64 participants, consisting of 56 residents and 8 small business owners.

Demographics for the residents

The largest proportion of residents are aged between 36 and 50 years old (39.3%) and have lived in the city for more than 30 years (33.9%). More than half of the respondents work full-time (52.7%) and have obtained a university degree (54.9%).



Demographics for the small business owners

Out of the 8 small business owners, seven have been operating in Cornwall for 1 to 5 years, while one has been in operation for 6 to 15 years. Seven of these companies employ between 1 and 5 employees, and the other employs between 16 and 30. Half of the companies operate in the retail, restaurant, or service sectors, three in professional services, and one in wholesale or business-to-business services.

Opinion on the demographics of Cornwall

Overall, residents and small businesses owners felt that Cornwall's population has grown over the past 5 years (75%) and the demographic makeup changed over the same period (84%).

Analysis of results from the Have Your Say platform



Cornwall strengths

From the perspective of small business owners, the main strengths for attracting investment are Cornwall's strategic location (50%), followed by the low cost of doing business (38%), and the existing business and industrial bases (13%). However, the main challenges that could impact future growth include rising costs and red tape (50%), recruitment and retention of the workforce (38%), and housing (25%).

Vision of the education

Among the residents surveyed, 80% believe that having a university or college degree significantly impacts a person's ability to secure employment, and the same proportion felt that their education was relevant to their current job. A substantial majority (93%) see a need for more higher education and skill development opportunities in the Cornwall and SD&G region. The top three programs mentioned by respondents are in the sectors of trades (18%), healthcare (16%), and personal support work (PSW) (9%). According to small business owners, having a post-secondary or university diploma does not impact their hiring decisions (63%), although 88% find their education relevant to their role. They also see the need for more higher education and skill development opportunities in the region (88%).

Education opportunities and programs needed

From both surveys, respondents shared their views on the potential for new educational opportunities in the city. The responses were fairly balanced, with 24% favoring more skilled trade courses, 23% supporting more college-level education programs, 22% advocating for more university-level education programs, and 21% desiring more professional development opportunities. Only 10% of respondents chose French language education.

Additionally, they highlighted the need for French and English courses, university degrees in various fields (business, law, nursing, engineering), a culinary school, entrepreneurship education, and continuing education for adults. Programs offering dual degrees between St. Lawrence College and a university were also frequently mentioned. Small business owners emphasized the need for more micro-credentials and better training tailored to local needs. They also pointed out the importance of collaborating with the local ecosystem to sustain a thriving environment.

Note: This analysis is based on the responses of 64 individuals and may reflect the views of a minority of Cornwall's residents.

Programs should be developed according to the community needs



Our analysis of stakeholder viewpoints from the citizen engagement session

- Economic growth and Challenges**
Participants highlighted Cornwall's potential for economic growth, emphasizing the region's comparative advantages and the importance of visionary work for future industries. They also pointed out the potential in controlled environment agriculture as an emerging sector.
- Professional Skills Gap**
They discussed the need for expanding educational programs in healthcare and trades to meet the demand for skilled professionals in Cornwall, emphasizing the importance of building on existing academic institutions and the need for ongoing recruitment of skilled labor.
- Community Engagement and Development**
Concerns have been expressed about Cornwall's reputation among developers and the need for the city to be more welcoming to new ideas and investments. They stressed the importance of reducing red tape and engaging the community in development processes.
- Housing and Infrastructure**
Suggestions have been made on focusing on higher density development and reducing parking restrictions to make housing more affordable and attract more people and businesses to Cornwall. Participants also mentioned the importance of affordable electricity as a comparative advantage in Ontario.
- Immigration and Workforce Diversity**
The importance of creating a welcoming environment for international workers to address labor shortages and enrich the community's cultural diversity is also something pointed out by the participants.



Case Study: Nipissing University



Nipissing University: A case that can provide insights for Cornwall



To shed further light on the potential impacts of a university in Cornwall, we examined the impacts experienced by North Bay from the establishment of the Nipissing University. We selected this case because, as described below, North Bay's demographic and socio-economic is similar profile to that of Cornwall.

Comparing Cornwall and North Bay

- **Geography:** Both cities are strategically located within reasonable driving distance from major urban centers. North Bay and Cornwall are three hours and four hours respectively from Toronto and three-and-a-half hours and 1.2 hours of Ottawa, respectively.
- **Demographics:** In 2021, Cornwall's population of 47,845 was slightly smaller than North Bay's 52,662. Both cities exhibit similar demographic trends. A breakdown shows that the working-age population (ages 15-64) in North Bay was 33,630, representing 63.9% of the total population, while in Cornwall, it was 28,195, accounting for 58.9% of the population. The population aged 65 and over in North Bay totaled 11,430, representing 21.7% of the population, compared to 12,145 in Cornwall, representing 25.4% of Cornwall's population.
- **Median household income:** In 2021, the median household income in Cornwall was \$60,000, compared to \$72,000 in North Bay.
- **Educational attainment:** Cornwall trails behind North Bay in terms of educational attainment. In 2016, North Bay had 7,215 (14.0% of the total population) residents with a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 3,480 (7.5% of the population) in Cornwall. By 2021, this number had grown to 8,500 (16.0% of the population) in North Bay, while Cornwall reached only 4,410 (9.2% of the population).
- **Industry:** North Bay's key industry sectors include: advanced manufacturing, forestry, aviation and aerospace, education, healthcare, and IT services. Cornwall's economic footprint has increased over the last 20 years and includes economic strengths in industries like manufacturing, healthcare, and logistics. However, in Cornwall, there are other emerging sectors, such as agri-tech, and renewable energy that could greatly benefit from the presence of a university.
- **Labour Market (employment) and skill gaps:** Cornwall's labour market is similar to North Bay's, showing potential for growth but also facing notable skill gaps in high-demand industries. North Bay's top industries by labour force participation include healthcare, retail, education, and public administration. In Cornwall, the leading industries by labor force participation are retail, healthcare, and manufacturing, with potential growth sectors in logistics and agri-tech.

In comparing the two cities, we note that Nipissing University was established in North Bay in 1992 and as a result the demographic and socio-economic factors of North Bay already reflect the presence of the university, which is not the case for Cornwall. In the next slides we explore the impact that Nipissing University has had on North Bay, providing further insights into how a similar institution could benefit Cornwall.

Nipissing University: Economic impacts



Capital and operating expenditure impacts of Nipissing University

Nipissing University has had a significant impact on North Bay, contributing to the local economy through direct, indirect, and induced effects. In 2016-17, Nipissing University's operating expenditures contributed approximately \$154.1 million to Ontario's GDP and supported over 1,100 full-time equivalent jobs. These economic impacts came from the following expenditures¹:

- The university's operating expenses (salaries and wages, benefits, goods and services, indirect taxes) totaling \$81.7 million.
- Non-local students living expenses (housing, food, books and supplies and personal expenses) totaling \$44.3 million.
- Visitors expenses (accommodation, food and beverages, transportation, entertainment and retail) totaling \$1.9 million.

When adjusted for 2021, the total GDP contribution to the province from the university's operating expenditures is estimated to be approximately \$179.7 million².

Moreover, between 2013 and 2017, Nipissing University's capital investments have generated approximately 147 full-time equivalent jobs across Ontario, contributing \$14.3 million to the province's GDP. Adjusted to 2021, the GDP contribution to the province is estimated to be approximately \$15.7 million.

Given the above economic impacts, we also acknowledge the limitations of the data. While the 2018 economic impact study of Nipissing University provides detailed information on the university's contributions to Ontario's GDP, there is no specific breakdown of the impacts particularly on North Bay. However, we note the following:

- **University operations:** A significant portion (68.7%) of the total GDP impact in Ontario stems from direct expenditures that is likely spent within North Bay. This includes operating wages, benefits, non-local student spending, and visitor expenditures. An additional 17.6% of the GDP impact comes from induced effects, which also benefit North Bay due to the university's presence. Non-local and international students contribute approximately \$44.3 million annually in living expenses, particularly on housing and food, which is directly spent in North Bay, given the need for students to live near the university campus.
- **Capital expenditures:** Direct capital expenditures have also contributed significantly to North Bay's economy. From 2013 to 2017, 57.9% of Nipissing University's direct employment impacts from capital projects were likely concentrated in North Bay, primarily due to the renovation and construction of new buildings on the university campus.

Note: The economic impact assessment is based on the input-output (I-O) model which is a framework used to analyze the interdependencies between different sectors of an economy. It maps out how the output from one industry serves as the input for another, creating a detailed matrix of economic flows. This model helps estimate the total economic impact of changes in economic activity through direct, indirect, and induced effects. The economic impact presented here is based on the coefficients calculated by Statistics Canada.

¹ Nipissing University Economic Impact Study (2018)

PwC ² CPI adjusted; analysis is based on 2021 census data, the latest available for calculating GDP per capita impact.

Nipissing University: Social impacts



Social impacts of Nipissing University

The university's impact goes beyond the economy. Through its programs, research and community involvement the university actively contributes to local and regional development.¹



Programs tailored to local needs

The university evaluates local needs and industry developments to adapt its programs accordingly:

- In healthcare, three nursing programs have been developed, providing local organizations with a pool of available talent.
- Programs in criminal justice and social work have been created to address labour shortages in these sectors.
- Some programs offer internships with the local community. The business school enables students to participate in two initiatives: the Innovation Initiatives Ontario North and the Youth Entrepreneurship Placement Program, both aimed at fostering the local economy.



Research on a local and regional level

Although most of the programs offered are for undergraduate studies, the university is also actively involved in local research initiatives:

- In the agricultural sector, researchers from various departments are working to increase agriculture productivity in northern Ontario.
- In the environmental sector, researchers have partnered with the City of North Bay and Nipissing First Nation to enhance the environmental sustainability of Lake Nipissing.
- Additionally, regional laboratories focused on health and wellness have been established in collaboration with various organizations throughout the region.
- Students are looking at the possibility to develop a biomass industry in northern Ontario through research.



Community development

The university actively engages with the community through various partnerships and programs:

- Students and staff members volunteer in local associations, contributing their time and skills.
- The Biidaaban Community Service-Learning Program is an Indigenous initiative where students participate in projects or activities within non-profit and community organizations.
- Additionally, joint diploma programs with local colleges offer graduate studies in several fields.
- The university and the Indigenous community are collaboratively developing programs that positively impact Indigenous students and the broader community.

Potential impacts for Cornwall (1/2)



Economic growth and employment contributions

- Using Nipissing as a benchmark, we note that a university could attract students, staff, and faculty who would spend money locally, boosting businesses in housing, retail, and services in Cornwall. Nipissing University's operations can be estimated to have contributed approximately \$179.7 million in Ontario in 2021. Given North Bay's population of 52,662 in 2021, the region's GDP per capita impact, derived from Nipissing University would be \$3,412¹.
- While not all GDP contributions remain in North Bay, the direct impacts, i.e. student living and university operations, account for 68.7% of the total impact and are likely concentrated in the local area. If 68.7% of Nipissing's GDP contribution remained in North Bay, it would amount to approximately \$123 million. Given this, the per capita GDP impact in North Bay, deriving from the direct operating impacts of the university would be approximately \$2,345. Assuming similar economic conditions, a similar-sized university in Cornwall could see comparable GDP impacts from university operations, contributing to both the local and provincial economy.
- Adjusted for 2021, Nipissing University's capital investments are estimated to have generated approximately \$15.7 million. While not all of the impact was confined to North Bay, a significant portion (57.9%) came from direct impacts, such as new building construction and major building renovations, which was likely concentrated in North Bay, given the location of the University premises. Similarly, capital expenditures from the establishment of a university in Cornwall could drive local employment and economic activity.
- Nonlocal students from outside North Bay also play a role in generating economic impacts to the region. They spend approximately \$44.3 million annually in living expenses in North Bay, about 65% of which is spent on housing and food directly in the surrounding areas of the university. Cornwall may benefit from comparable direct impacts if a university is established.



Potential impacts for Cornwall (2/2)



Research and innovation

- By partnering with local industries, a university in Cornwall could drive innovation in key sectors such as agri-tech, manufacturing, and healthcare. In North Bay, Nipissing University formed partnerships with Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada and local farmers to enhance agricultural productivity, while also adapting its nursing programs to meet local healthcare needs. Additionally, researchers collaborated with the City of North Bay and Nipissing First Nation to improve the environmental viability of Lake Nipissing. Cornwall could also experience similar benefits through targeted industry collaborations.
- Nipissing University's ability to secure provincial and federal research grants highlights the potential for a university in Cornwall to advance research and development in the region. This could lead to innovations that benefit local industries and create new opportunities for economic growth.
- The presence of a university could stimulate research in areas critical to Cornwall, such as renewable energy, supply chain management and advanced manufacturing, supporting the city's strategic growth sectors. At Nipissing, researchers helped develop the biomass industry in Northern Ontario and partnered with local industries to improve Lake Nipissing's environmental viability, showcasing the university's role in driving innovation. Cornwall could similarly benefit from a university fostering growth in its strategic sectors.

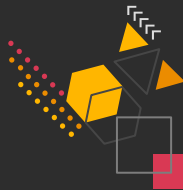
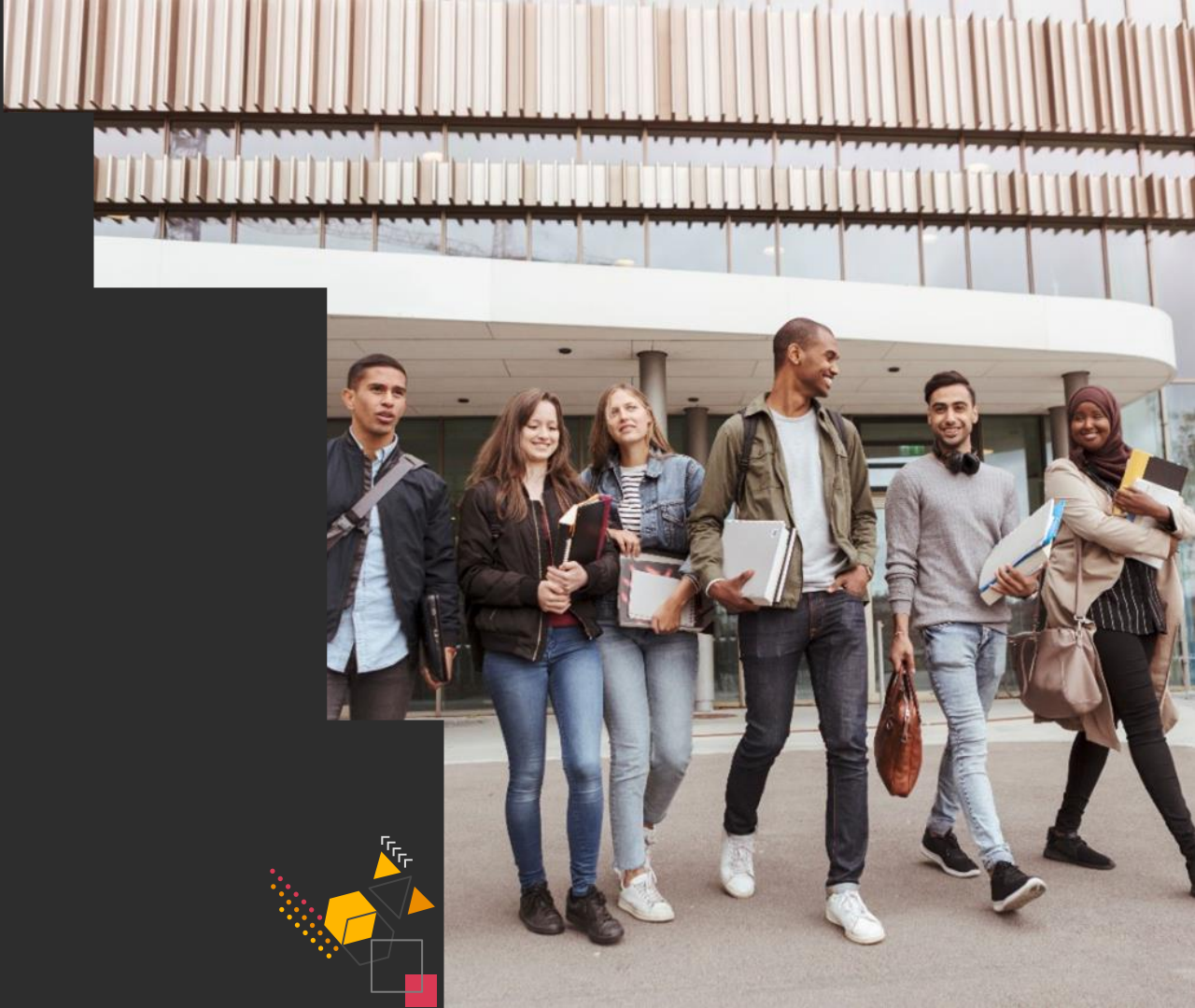


Building human capital

- Nipissing University's approach to applied and experiential learning has led to high graduate employment rates, with over 90% of students finding employment within six months of graduation. Based on feedback from stakeholders in Cornwall, there is a strong demand for applied learning and co-op opportunities in the region as well. A university in Cornwall incorporating such programs could potentially see comparable outcomes to that of Nipissing.
- Nipissing University's internships with the local community (e.g. the Youth Entrepreneurship Placement Program) build human capital for the regional labour market. Stakeholders in Cornwall have emphasized the need for similar co-op opportunities, which a university could provide. Similar initiatives in Cornwall could equip students with practical skills while actively contributing to the local economy.
- By aligning academic programs with local industry needs and addressing the specific skill gaps, a university in Cornwall could fill high-demand roles in fields such as healthcare, digital skills, French language proficiency, skilled trades, and technology. In North Bay, Nipissing University adapted its programs to meet local workforce demands, particularly in healthcare and social work, resulting in higher employment rates. Over 90% of Nipissing graduates found employment within six months of graduation, and 96% within two years. Cornwall may see comparable impacts to employment rates.



Conclusion



Conclusion



Throughout this study, we highlighted four opportunities as well as three challenges to be addressed in order to establish a university in the Cornwall region.

Opportunities

1

Partnerships with local industries: Collaborations with local industries and institutions could foster innovation in sectors such as health care and agri-tech.

2

Addressing skills needs: A university in Cornwall could create employment opportunities by addressing skills gaps and supporting workforce development through internship and co-op programs aligned with regional needs.

3

Substantial economic benefits: The university could provide similar economic benefits to Nipissing University, which contributed \$154.1 million to Ontario's GDP and supported over 1,100 full-time equivalent jobs in 2016-17.

4

Infrastructure development: Student spending, local employment and infrastructure development would boost the local economy.

Challenges

1

Pressing issues: Issues such as cost of living, housing, and infrastructure need to be addressed to support economic development.

2

Program design: Engaging diverse stakeholders in discussions is essential to ensure programs are designed to meet current and future needs, and to avoid duplication with neighboring universities.

3

Regional collaboration: Regional collaboration should be developed to enhance the attractiveness of the entire region.

In conclusion, establishing a university in Cornwall could bring substantial economic benefits and address local skills needs, but designing tailored programs and addressing pressing issues is crucial to ensure the success of this initiative.

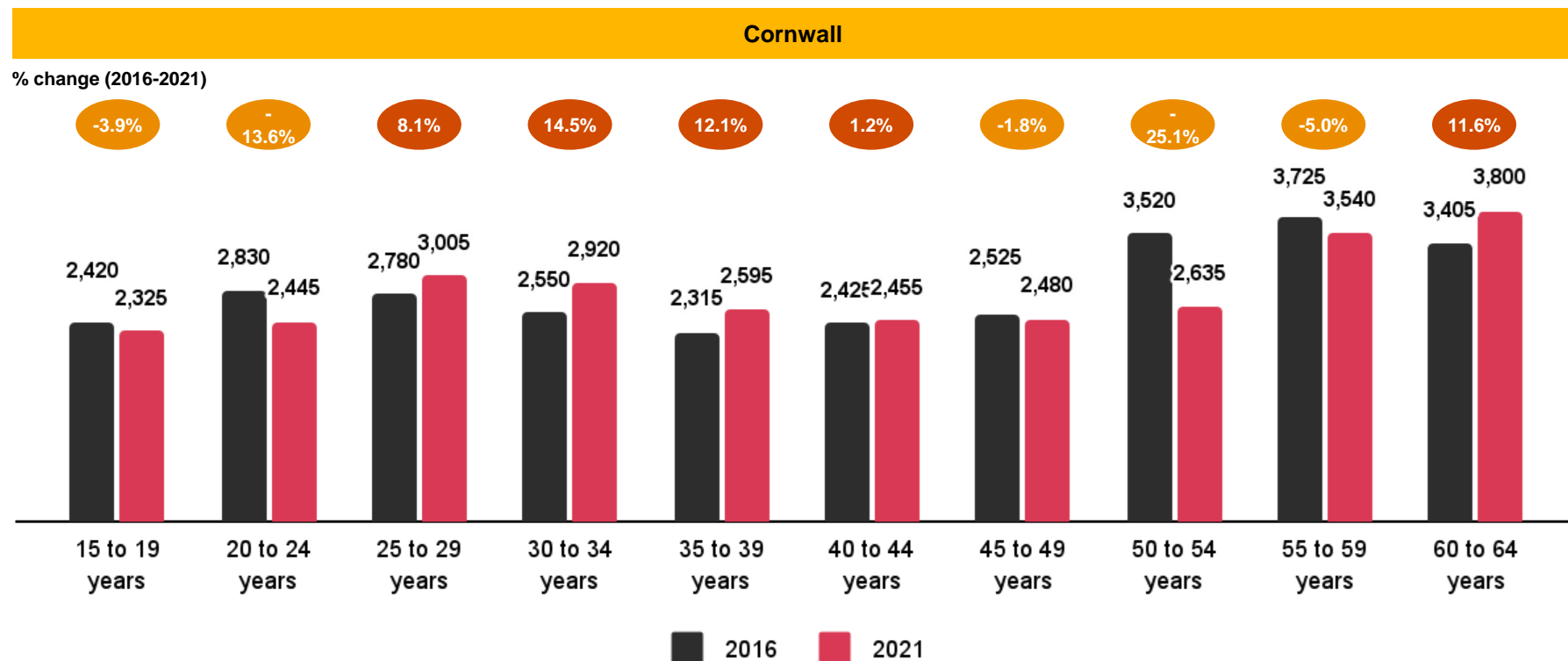


Thank you

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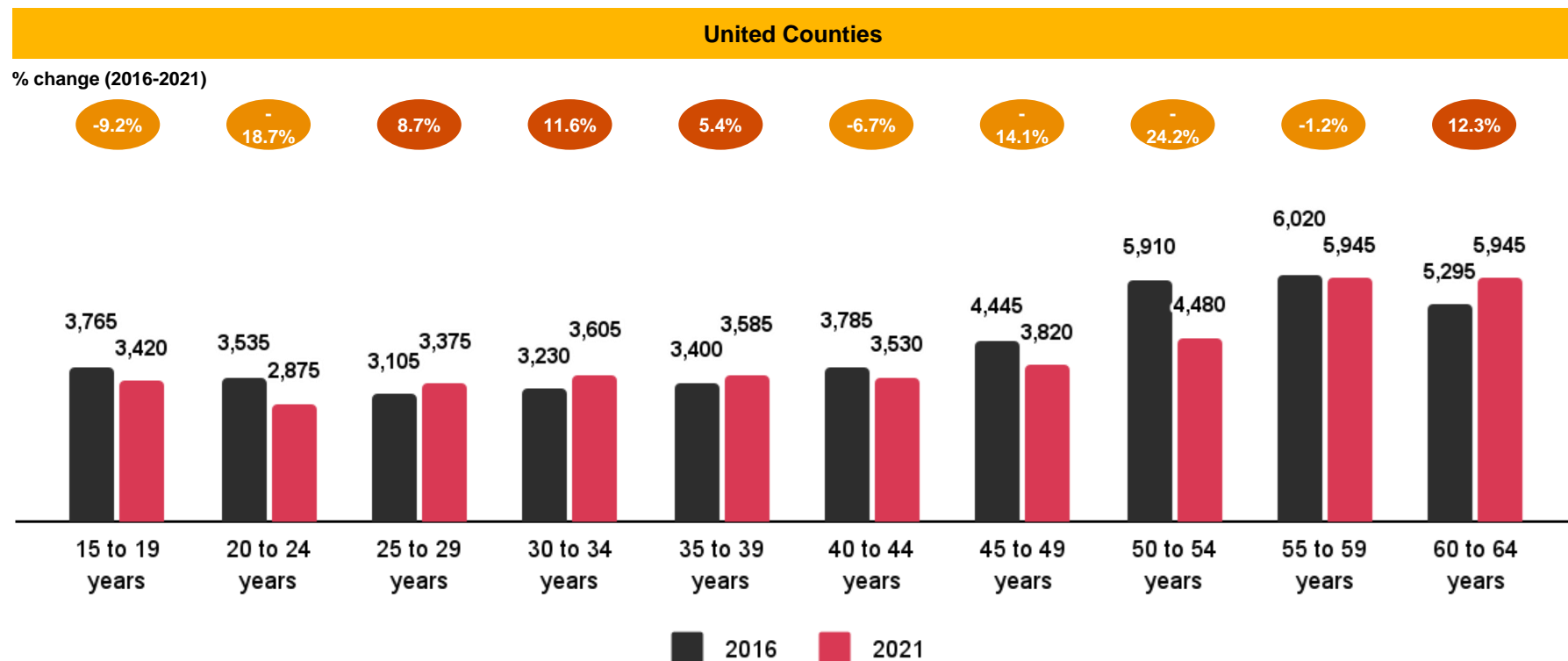


Appendix A: Working age (15-64) population breakdown (1/3)



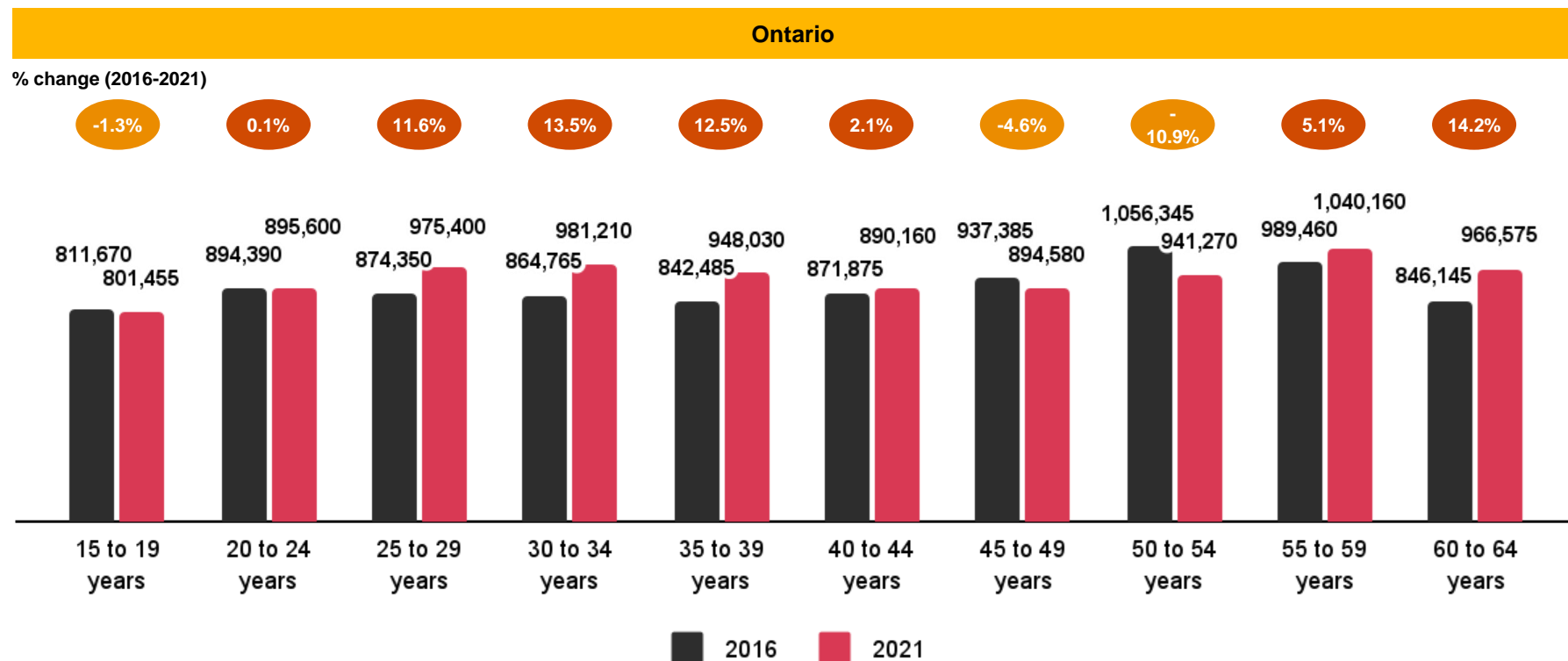
Source: Statistics Canada, Censuses 2016 and 2021; PwC Analysis

Appendix A: Working age (15-64) population breakdown (2/3)



Source: Statistics Canada, Censuses 2016 and 2021; PwC Analysis

Appendix A: Working age (15-64) population breakdown (3/3)



Source: Statistics Canada, Censuses 2016 and 2021; PwC Analysis

Appendix B: Change in the median wage by industry



Change in real median wage between 2017 and 2022	Cornwall	Ontario
All industries	3.22%	-0.03%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (11)	-12.26%	10.76%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (21)	-17.14%	-6.82%
Utilities (22)	-2.40%	-0.41%
Construction (23)	4.45%	-0.64%
Manufacturing (31-33)	-1.80%	-7.24%
Wholesale trade (41)	-1.01%	0.33%
Retail trade (44-45)	-2.62%	-1.43%
Transportation and warehousing (48-49)	-7.03%	-13.47%
Information and cultural industries (51)	12.27%	7.88%
Finance and insurance (52)	5.82%	3.19%
Real estate and rental and leasing (53)	5.28%	9.20%
Professional, scientific and technical services (54)	-4.30%	5.45%
Business, building and other support services (55-56)	-11.00%*	1.94%*
Education services (61)	-12.61%	-7.03%
Health care and social assistance (62)	-3.96%	-5.18%
Arts, entertainment and recreation (71)	-16.83%	-5.38%
Accommodation and food services (72)	1.73%	-2.44%
Other services (except public administration) (81)	8.15%	-0.58%

* Due to data limitations, the variation is between 2019 and 2022

Source: Statistics Canada, Income and Financial Data of Individuals, Preliminary T1 Family File ; PwC Analysis

Appendix C: Median wage by industry in 2022



Median wage by industry in 2022	Cornwall	Ontario
All industries	\$39,320	\$45,660
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (11)	\$24,630	\$32,810
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (21)	\$66,320	\$100,760
Utilities (22)	\$107,500	\$119,540
Construction (23)	\$52,670	\$57,600
Manufacturing (31-33)	\$49,660	\$55,460
Wholesale trade (41)	\$52,060	\$60,550
Retail trade (44-45)	\$24,640	\$24,230
Transportation and warehousing (48-49)	\$45,920	\$43,340
Information and cultural industries (51)	\$47,130	\$77,580
Finance and insurance (52)	\$50,850	\$75,670
Real estate and rental and leasing (53)	\$41,560	\$49,350
Professional, scientific and technical services (54)	\$49,710	\$70,160
Business, building and other support services (55-56)	\$25,030	\$33,360
Education services (61)	\$45,370	\$52,610
Health care and social assistance (62)	\$45,540	\$48,610
Arts, entertainment and recreation (71)	\$14,950	\$18,660
Accommodation and food services (72)	\$17,100	\$16,480
Other services (except public administration) (81)	\$35,070	\$37,500

* Due to data limitations, the variation is between 2019 and 2022

Source: Statistics Canada, Income and Financial Data of Individuals, Preliminary T1 Family File ; PwC Analysis

Appendix D: Glossary



The analysis presents the migration trend over 5 years. Here are the definitions related to the terms included in the analysis.

Non-movers: Individuals who have not moved in the past five years.

Movers: Individuals who have moved in the past five years.

Non-migrants: Individuals who moved within the same census area they lived in five years ago.

Migrants: Individuals who moved and did not live in the same census area five years ago.

Internal migrants: Migrants who moved within Canada.

Interprovincial migrants: Migrants who moved from one province to another within Canada.

Intraprovincial migrants: Migrants who moved within the same province in Canada.

External migrants: Migrants who moved to Canada from another country.