



Edmonton Business Census 2025

Using data to support the growth of
Edmonton's economy

Summary of findings from the 2025 Business Census
December 10, 2025

Land Acknowledgement

The City of Edmonton acknowledges the traditional land on which we reside, is in Treaty Six Territory. We would like to thank the diverse Indigenous Peoples whose ancestors' footsteps have marked this territory for centuries, such as nêhiyaw (Nay-hee-yow) / Cree, Dene (Deh-neyh), Anishinaabe (Ah-nish-in-ah-bay) / Saulteaux (So-toe), Nakota Isga (Na-koh-tah ee-ska) / Nakota Sioux (Na-koh-tah sue), and Niitsitapi (Nit-si-tahp-ee) / Blackfoot peoples. We also acknowledge this as the Métis' (May-tee) homeland and the home of one of the largest communities of Inuit south of the 60th parallel. It is a welcoming place for all peoples who come from around the world to share Edmonton as a home. Together we call upon all of our collective, honoured traditions and spirits to work in building a great city for today and future generations.



Introduction

Businesses of all sizes and sectors fuel Edmonton's dynamic economy. To truly understand this diverse community, we need data that offers us a clear picture of our local economy. The City of Edmonton launched the city's first-ever business census in 2023 to fill gaps in business data with timely, relevant and comprehensive information.

The 2025 census provides data for the entire City of Edmonton for the first time. This comprehensive, clear picture of our city's businesses will be utilized by both public and private sector organizations, including the City of Edmonton.

The business census is unique as all commercial, industrial and institutional areas in Edmonton are visited in-person. This ensures we have a **true count** of businesses.

The City also surveys businesses to learn more about them. Most of the surveys are completed in-person with the remaining data collected through telephone surveys, desk research and online forms. Home-based businesses are not included.

This data provides insights today that will help plan for tomorrow. By analyzing trends in sectors and various areas of the city, we can make informed decisions that support businesses, nurture innovation and ensure Edmonton's economy is resilient, vibrant and inclusive.

We extend our gratitude to our economic development collaborators, Business Improvement Areas and the business community for participating in the census.



Business Census summer students conducting the business census survey with Jacqueline Jacek, founder and owner of JACEK Chocolate Couture.

Summary of Findings

Survey Area

In 2025, the City of Edmonton expanded the Business Census to cover the entire city and completed more surveys than ever before. In total, the City completed 19,426 surveys in 2025, up from 9,996 in 2024. Because of this increased coverage, there are noticeable year-over-year differences in the data. The City also revisited all locations from the previous years to get the latest information.

Highlights

- The study identified 29,894 businesses employing 575,197 people (with 76 per cent in full-time roles and 24 per cent in part-time roles).
- The average number of people employed per establishment is 19.
- Not including the Public Administration sector, small businesses (fewer than 100 employees) accounted for 97 per cent of all establishments and 61 per cent of employment in Edmonton.
- In-person surveys accounted for the majority of completed surveys at 52 per cent.

Business Categories

The results identify which industry each business operates in according to the 2022 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). This system provides a clear picture of the different types of businesses operating in Edmonton and can be compared to other cities across North America. The largest five in Edmonton are:

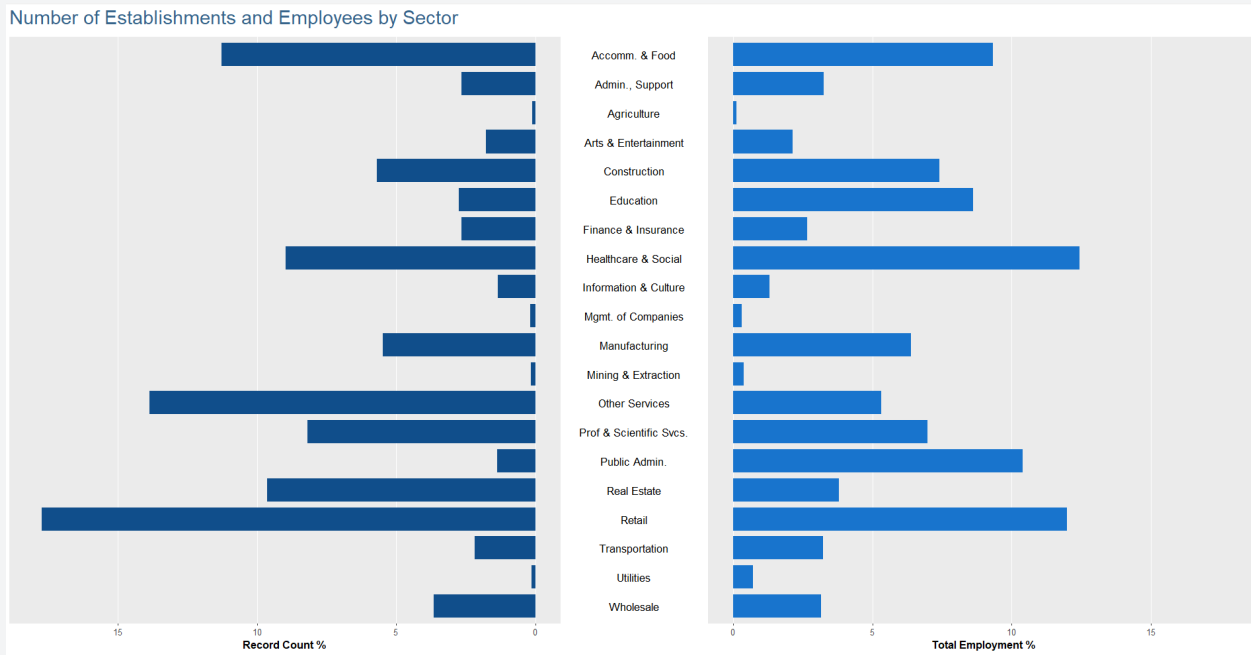
- Retail Trade (**18 per cent**)
- Other Services (except Public Administration) (**14 per cent**) (e.g. barbers, beauty shops, mechanic and repair shops, etc.)
- Accommodation and Food Services (**11 per cent**)
- Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (**10 per cent**)
- Health Care and Social Assistance (**9 per cent**)

These sectors represent 62 per cent of all businesses in the city and provide 43 per cent of jobs in the city.

Overall, Edmonton's economy is diverse. It has a wide mix of businesses, ranging from manufacturers and builders to engineers, health care providers and hoteliers.

Employment by Sector

Edmonton’s workforce is supported by a mix of businesses, from large institutions to local shops. The chart compares the number of businesses and demonstrates the share of employment by business varies across sectors.



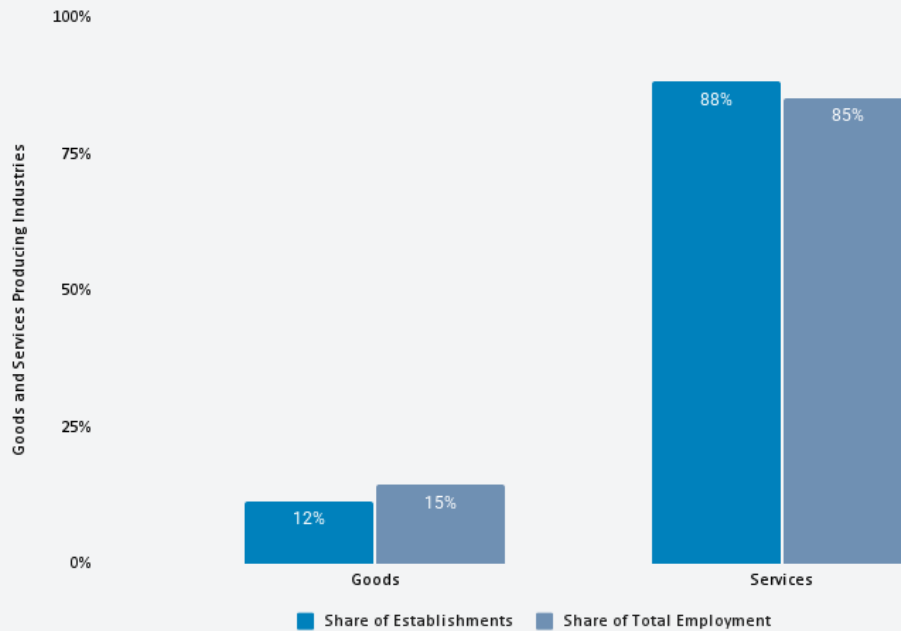
Large organizations (100 to 500+ employees) are the primary employers in health care, public administration and educational services. Edmonton is host to organizations in all levels of government, large hospitals and the University of Alberta. These entities rely on scale to deliver essential services.

Retail trade and accommodation and food services are a significant component of Edmonton's economy. These businesses drive our daily commerce and come in a variety of sizes from small shops and eateries with less than five employees, to large department stores, restaurants or hotels with a hundred or more employees.

This data confirms that Edmonton's local economy has a broad foundation, relying on large institutions and a diverse network of small and medium sized businesses.

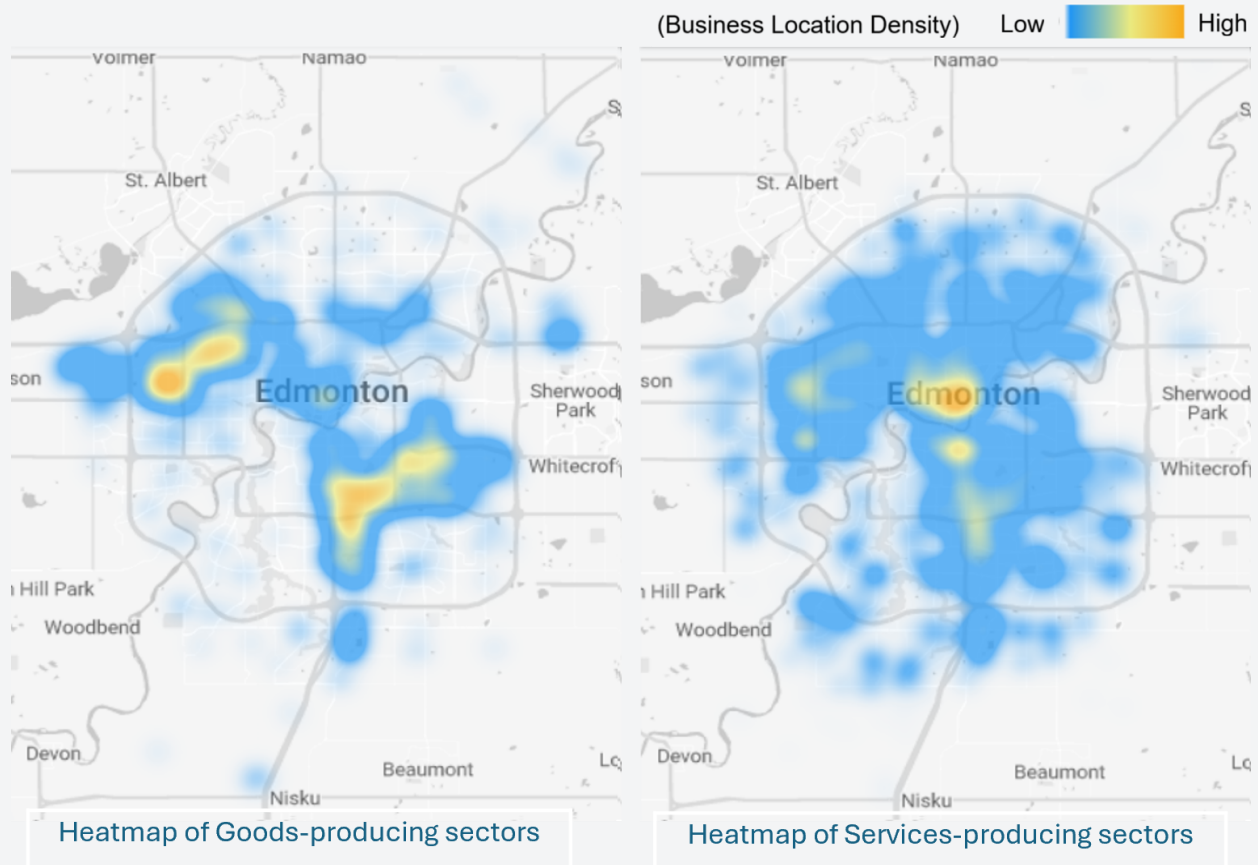
Goods and Services Producing Sectors

Based on business and employment counts, Edmonton's economy is mainly services-oriented. The service sector accounts for 88 per cent of all businesses in the city, and about 85 per cent of the total workforce.



Services-producing industries encompass a broad range of activities including wholesale and retail trade, health care, accountants, lawyers, engineers, public services and other personal services.

While smaller in scale, goods-producing industries remain critical to the local economy, encompassing sectors involved in the creation and manufacturing of tangible products.



The Heatmap of Goods-producing sectors (on the left) shows business locations are concentrated in Southeast and Jasper Place districts. These clusters reflect zoning rules, the need of goods-producing businesses for physical assets - such as large land parcels, and access to major transportation corridors.

On the other hand, the Heatmap of Services-producing sectors (on the right) shows a strong, centralized concentration in the downtown core and central business district - the main hub for finance, corporate headquarters, and specialized services. The density also extends outwards into numerous smaller, distinct hot spots across the City, often aligning with major commercial strips, shopping centers, and mixed-use areas.

After a \$52 million investment in Edmonton, Siwin Foods is here to stay

What started in an incubator in Leduc 21 years ago has turned into a multi-million dollar food manufacturing business in Edmonton. Siwin Foods can now be found at retailers such as Costco and Walmart and they are also exporting to other markets, including the US and Mexico.

“We have great access to labour where we are, and we recognize that our employees need accessible transportation, which we also have here,” says Gord Dejong, Vice President Siwin Foods. “We also needed reliable city services, like water and power, which we have an immense demand for. We can’t operate with an interruption to power.”

Other motivating factors for doing business in Edmonton include the lowest provincial taxes in the country, affordable land, access to agriculture and a supportive business environment.

“I just love Alberta,” says DeJong. “This is a great place to do business.”



Siwin Foods

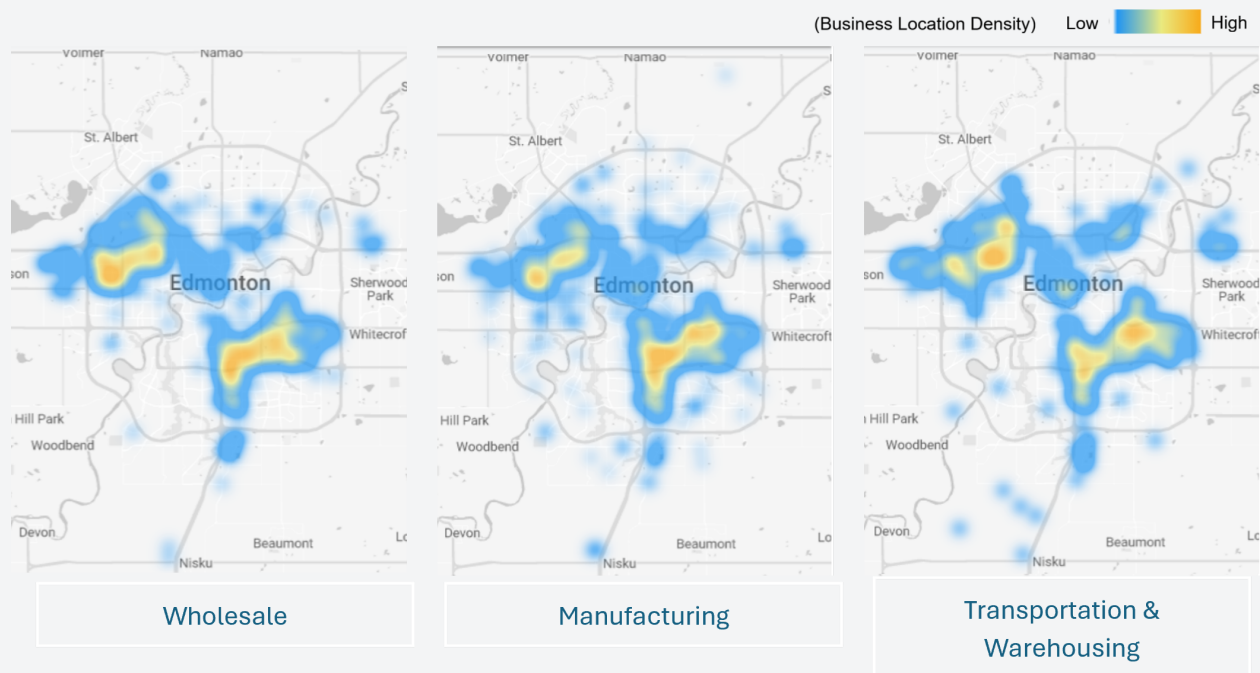
Industry Clusters

Industry clusters are groups of similar businesses that locate close to each other. These businesses often buy and sell from each other, offer similar services or have the same infrastructure needs. When businesses cluster like this they attract even more companies to the area. Knowing where these groupings are helps the City grow the economy. It helps us decide where to build roads and utilities, where to attract new businesses and how to support specific industries.

This section gives a quick look at clusters. To fully understand them, we would need more detailed information. Generally, these clusters form because the area has good access (like roads and trains), enough people nearby to work and shop and other businesses nearby.

Wholesale, Manufacturing and Transportation Hubs

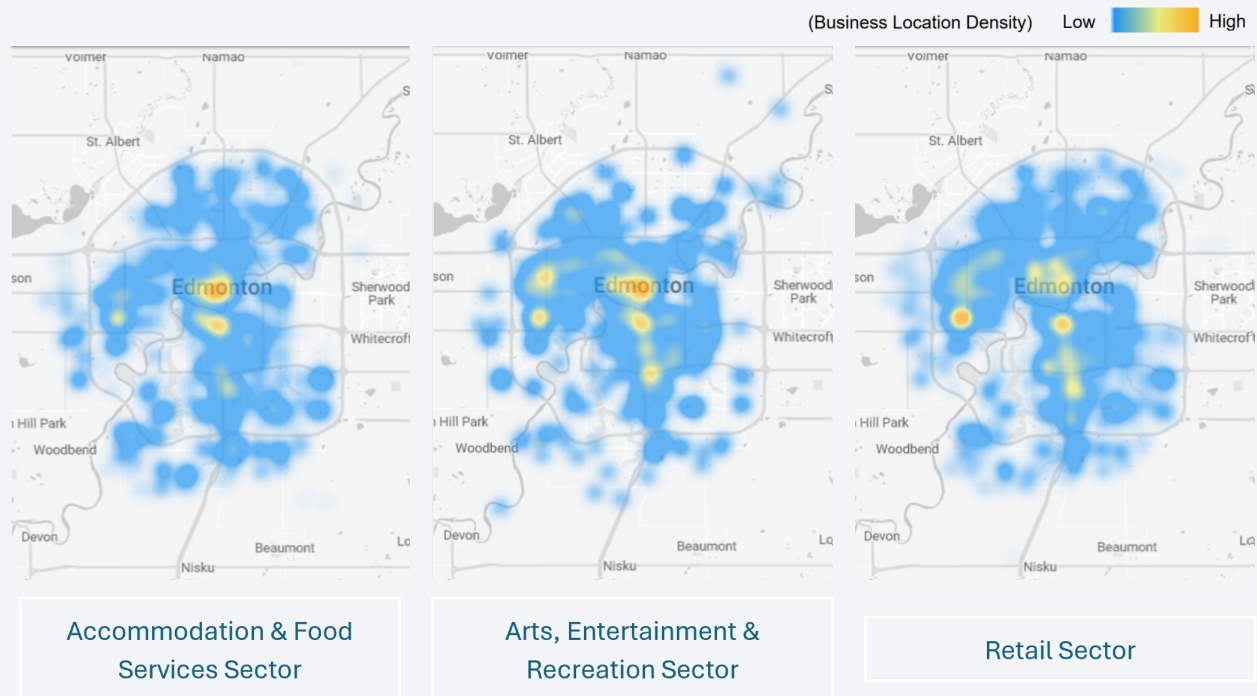
The data shows a distinct pattern of businesses in the Wholesale, Manufacturing and Transportation and Warehousing sectors located near each other. It suggests the sectors often operate in close proximity due to zoning rules and to streamline supply chains, reduce transportation costs and facilitate efficient distribution of goods.



Entertainment, Shopping and Leisure

The data shows that businesses in the Accommodation and Food Services, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, and Retail sectors often locate near one another. This likely happens because the businesses serve similar customers like tourists and locals looking for leisure activities. By locating near each other, these businesses help each other. They make the area more interesting to visit and in turn attract more patrons.

While much of the census area contains these businesses, clear concentrations appear in Edmonton's Downtown, Old Strathcona (Whyte Avenue area) and West Edmonton (in particular, West Edmonton Mall). It can be inferred that these three areas serve as Edmonton's destination locations for anyone looking to eat, shop, recreate and/or be entertained.

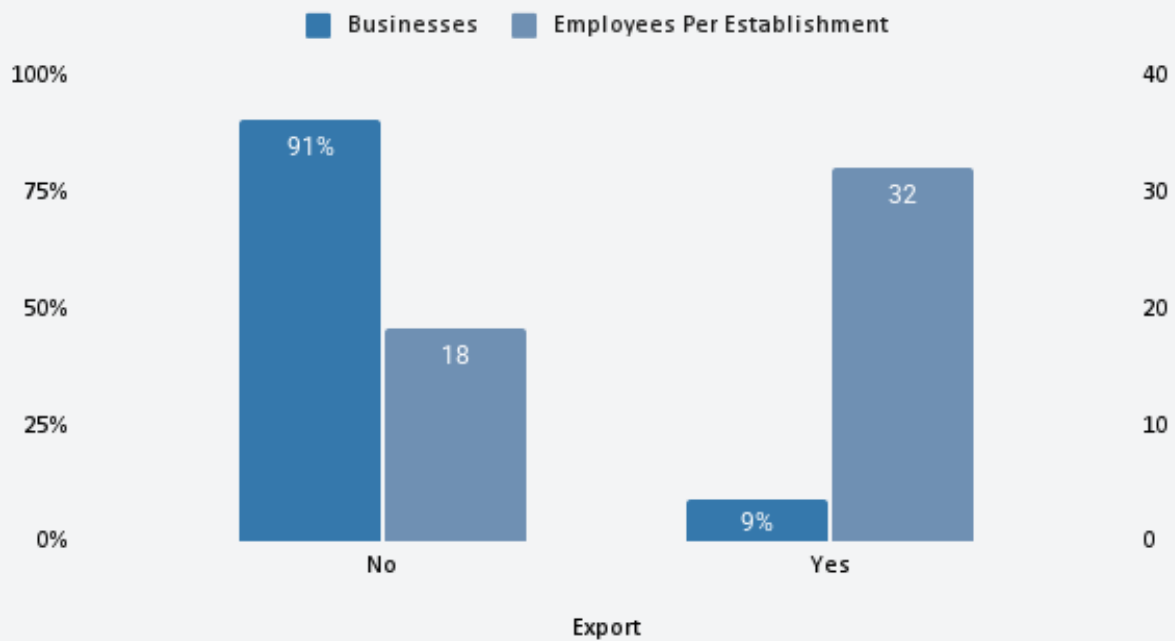


Exporters as Large Employers

Nine per cent of businesses said they export goods outside of Canada.

The data suggests businesses that export also employ more people. On average, exporters have 32 employees per establishment while non-exporters have 18 employees.

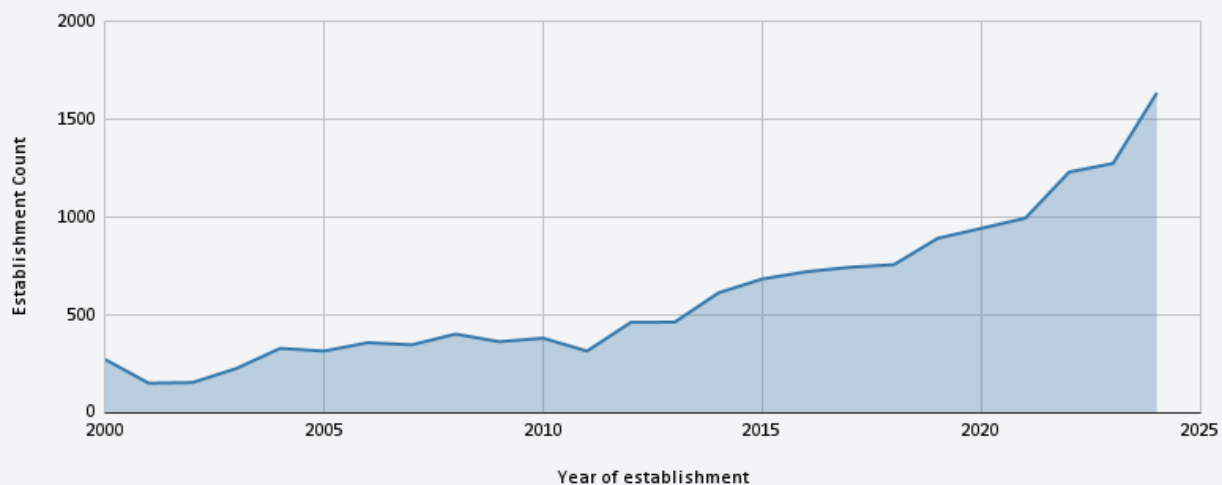
Export Status and People Employed



Year of Business Establishment

This chart shows when businesses in Edmonton first opened. Nearly 20,000 businesses responded to the question "What year did your business start operating in Edmonton?" Only the past 24 years are displayed for ease of reading.

Year of Business Establishment (2000-2024)



Although not displayed on the chart, more than 158 businesses are over 100 years old. Because data collection concluded at the end of August 2025, only data up to the end of 2024 is displayed.

Sustained Success: Audreys Books Celebrates 50 Years in Edmonton

Audreys Books, a fixture in Edmonton's downtown core, recently celebrated its 50th anniversary, offering insights into business longevity and the current retail environment in the city.

Manager Kelly Dyer highlighted that achieving five decades in business underscores the viability of operating downtown and serves as encouragement for new businesses looking to establish themselves in the area. Dyer also attributes their success to their involvement in the community, which has kept their business top of mind for Edmontonians, even during lean times.



Kelly Dyer, Store Manager, pictured at Audreys

"It's all about community," says Dyer. Audreys is seeing more businesses open downtown and be successful, as well as increased foot traffic, particularly since the recent opening of O-day'min Park.

Dyer noted that the retail sector's strength in Edmonton, as reflected in the business census data, stems from shifting consumer preferences. There is a strong, growing demand for "mom and pop shops" and unique, local and Canadian businesses. They are seeing a desire from consumers to shop locally and create community where they live.

Regarding business census information, Dyer emphasized its critical role in facilitating growth and planning. This data helps local enterprises understand the landscape of successful businesses around them, reinforcing the message that the downtown area is a thriving place to launch and maintain a venture.

Diversity in Local Business Ownership

Analysis of business ownership reveals a predominantly male demographic, with men representing 62.5% of business owners. Women comprise 29.9 per cent of owners while 6 per cent preferred not to answer and 0.7 per cent identified as LGBTQ2S+. Owners identifying as persons with disabilities, individuals new to Canada (less than three years in Canada) or those who identified as another category, not specified here, total less than 1 per cent.

The survey revealed that a business may have one or multiple owners, all of whom may or may not identify with multiple demographic categories. This intersectionality adds a layer of complexity to the understanding of diversity and highlights the uniqueness of each entrepreneur's narrative. Therefore, the counts in the table below represent individual responses to this question.

Identity-based data is essential for understanding the demographic reality of Edmonton's business landscape, allowing us to establish a clear benchmark, effectively track diversity over time and actively celebrate and promote the richness of the city's diverse business community.

Ethnic or Cultural Background

Demographic Category - Level 1	% of Owners	Demographic Category - Level 2	% of Owners
African Origins	4.2%	African, n.o.s.	2.8%
		Central and West African origins	0.2%
		North African Origins	0.3%
		Southern and East African origins	0.9%
Asian Origins	28.6%	Asian, n.o.s.	4.1%
		East and Southeast Asian origins	10.7%
		South Asian origins	9.3%
		West and Central Asian and Middle Eastern origins	4.4%
Caribbean origins	0.1%	Caribbean, n.o.s.	0.1%
European Origins	2.2%	British Isles origins	0.3%
		Eastern European origins	0.7%
		European, n.o.s.	0.2%
		Other Western European origins	0.2%
		Southeast European origins	0.2%
		Southern European origins	0.8%
Latin, Central and South American origins	1.0%	Hispanic, n.o.s.	0.3%
		Latin, Central or South American, n.o.s.	0.5%
		Mexican	0.1%
North American Origins	3.4%	North American Indigenous origins	1.5%
		Other North American origins	1.9%
Oceanian Origins	0.1%	Oceanian, n.o.s.	0.1%
Other ethnic and cultural origins	60.5%	Caucasian (White), n.o.s.	59.6%
		Jewish	0.1%
		Other ethnic and cultural origins, n.o.s.	0.9%

Notes

- Categories used in coding were derived from Statistics Canada's List of Ethnic or Cultural Origins 2021.
- "n.o.s." refers to "not otherwise specified".
- Demographic Category - Level 1 sums up all responses into the most generic category defined in Statistics Canada's List of Ethnic or Cultural Origins.
- Demographic Category - Level 2 presents the most detailed ethnic or cultural origin that could be presented. Any categories with fewer than two responses were rolled up into a more generic category - e.g. Caribbean, n.o.s. includes responses from other Caribbean nations.

Methodology

Who do we collect data from?

The Business Census defines a business as any entity that operates from a commercial location in Edmonton. This may include for profit, not-for-profit, non-governmental agencies, government and government agencies. Home-based businesses are outside the scope of the survey.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Adherence to corporate privacy policies was paramount throughout the project. The following measures were implemented to safeguard privacy and confidentiality:

- **Informed Consent:** Before participating in any survey, businesses were provided with a FOIP statement about the purpose of the survey and the use of their response. Informed consent was obtained to ensure voluntary participation.
- **Anonymity:** Responses were anonymized during data collection and analysis to protect personal identifying information.
- **Data Storage:** All data was collected and stored electronically in secure folders in compliance with corporate data security standards. Access to the data was restricted to authorized personnel only.
- **Reporting Aggregation:** Results were aggregated at a level that preserved the anonymity of individual respondents. This approach was applied in the reporting phase to present insights without compromising confidentiality.
- **Scope of Open Data:** The open data primarily focuses on publicly available business information, which typically includes the business name, address or geographical location, website, postal code, business description and NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) codes.

How is data collected?

Students currently enrolled in Canadian post-secondary institutions were hired and trained to collect the data.

- **In-Person Surveys:** In-person surveys were conducted to facilitate direct engagement with businesses and confirm physical address and location, ensuring an accurate count of business establishments. Enumerators utilized

Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) maps and structured questionnaires to ensure consistency across responses and comprehensive coverage.

- **Online Forms:** An online survey was designed and published on the City's website to facilitate broader participation. The survey link was distributed through multiple channels, including postcards, QR codes and social media. Use of the online method facilitated the comparative measurement of the effectiveness of various data collection methods.
- **Phone Surveys:** Phone surveys were utilized for follow-ups with businesses unable to participate in the in-person survey. Standardized training and scripts ensured data collection consistency. Businesses were also offered the option of completing the online survey or rescheduling callbacks to maximize participation.
- **Other Methods:** Additional data collection methods, including email contact and desk research, were employed to increase efficiency. These methods primarily targeted establishments with multiple locations, restricted access, non-traditional operating hours or instances where it was more efficient to contact a central corporate office for data consolidation.

Data Editing and Imputation

1. **Standardization and Coding:** This step ensures all textual and demographic data is categorized according to established national standards.
 - **Industry Classification:** Businesses were categorized to the most applicable industry group as per the 2022 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Canada 2022 Version 1.0.
 - **Demographic Coding:** Responses to the demographic questions were coded to Statistics Canada's List of Ethnic or Cultural Origins 2021.
2. **Imputation of Publicly Available Information:** Missing descriptive data for required fields was completed through manual, online research and verification. Specifically, missing values related to publicly available business information (such as the goods or services provided, company history, employment or contact information) were supplemented through targeted desk research.
3. **Imputation of Total Employment Data:** The following multi-step imputation strategy was used to address missing employment data for businesses that did not complete the survey (about 29 percent).

- a. **Prioritization of Existing Data:** Missing values for total employment were first addressed by incorporating available data from the 2024 Business Census records for the same establishments.
- b. **Employment imputation for large institutions** (e.g., major hospitals, universities, and large government agencies): that lack sufficient comparable establishments for reliable group mean imputation were determined via desktop research. This utilized official annual reports and publicly disclosed operational statistics to derive a specific estimate. This research also focused on institutions with multiple locations, where employment exhibits wide variations despite shared NAICS codes.
- c. **Parking lots:** These establishments lack permanent on-site staff, but have staff regularly visit to carry out tasks. For this reason, we record zero employees at each parking lot and capture all employees at the parking lot company office(s).
- d. **Hierarchical Group Mean Imputation:** For the majority of remaining missing records, a Hierarchical Group Mean Imputation was applied to preserve the inherent relationships and similarities in the data. The dataset was stratified into 708 Canadian Industry Groups based on their 6-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes. The mean total employment for each of the 708 groups was calculated independently. Missing employment values within each group were then replaced with that group's corresponding mean.

Limitations

- Home-based businesses are not included in this study.
- Coverage is limited to physically observed businesses. Some locations may have been missed due to a combination of external factors such as restricted access or insufficient exterior signage.
- Survey responses are voluntary and were not always provided by senior managers or the business owner.
- Non-response from some businesses to some of the optional questions may lead to an incomplete capture of certain underlying economic trends.
- The reliance on desktop research is subject to the limitations of publicly available information.

Future Plans and Strategic Direction

As previous business census iterations focused on select districts and wards, the 2025 data and report provide the first comprehensive baseline data for the entire city. This marks a significant and strategic shift in the project's scope and coverage. Future years will provide trends and year-over-year comparisons for our economic landscape. To ensure data remains timely and relevant, areas surveyed in previous years will be revisited in 2026 to capture the most current data.