WAINWRIGHT

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Industry Report

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Executive Summary

Wainwright's economy is shaped by a handful of large institutional and service anchors alongside a business base that is much smaller and more fragmented. Educational services remains at the center of the employment profile, by far the largest sector and industry, while health care and social assistance, retail trade, and construction also account for substantial shares of local jobs. This is not a story of uniform growth across the economy. Rather, it reflects a community where employment remains concentrated in a small number of sectors, even as several smaller areas have changed quickly.

Recent job gains have been strongest in health care, selected service activities, and some resource-related industries. Health care and social assistance grew much faster than education over both the short and longer term, and several smaller industries posted very large percentage increases from modest starting points, including residential care, machinery wholesaling, and automotive parts retail. Mining, oil and gas activity, and utilities also became more prominent in Wainwright's specialized employment mix, while finance and insurance recorded one of the clearer sector-wide gains. At the same time, other parts of the economy moved in the opposite direction. Manufacturing remained small, transportation and warehousing fell sharply over the latest year, and accommodation-related employment showed weakness despite longer-term gains in the broader accommodation and food services sector. The steepest declines were concentrated in very small industries, limiting their effect on the total job base but still signaling uneven local conditions.

Wainwright's business structure reinforces that pattern. The number of establishments has grown strongly since 2020 and largely maintained those gains after a sharp jump in 2022, but the business base is overwhelmingly composed of very small firms, especially those with no employees. Agriculture and real estate account for the largest numbers of establishments, while professional and technical services also expanded strongly. As a result, Wainwright's economy is concentrated and diversified in a specific way: major employment is anchored by education and other public-facing services, specialization remains strong in sectors such as education and resource activity, and much of the business community consists of small operators rather than a deep bench of larger employers.

Fastest Growing Industries

In Wainwright, farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment merchant wholesalers employed 45 people in 2024, up 221.4% from the prior year. Other residential care facilities had 71 workers, a 3,450.0% increase.

Wainwright's fastest growing industries in the selected period were led by a small set of service and trade categories, with job gains concentrated in a few niches rather than spread evenly across the local economy. The largest group on the list was Other residential care facilities, which reached 71 workers and posted a 3,450% one-year increase. Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment merchant wholesalers followed with 45 workers, up 221.4%, while Automotive parts, accessories and tire retailers employed 61 people after a 205% rise. Several other industries also showed strong growth from relatively small bases. Specialty food retailers rose 141.7% to 29 workers, Support activities for crop production increased 133.3% to 14, and Special food services reached 15 after a 200% gain. Smaller groups such as Used merchandise stores and Waste treatment and disposal had only a handful of jobs, yet still doubled or tripled in size.

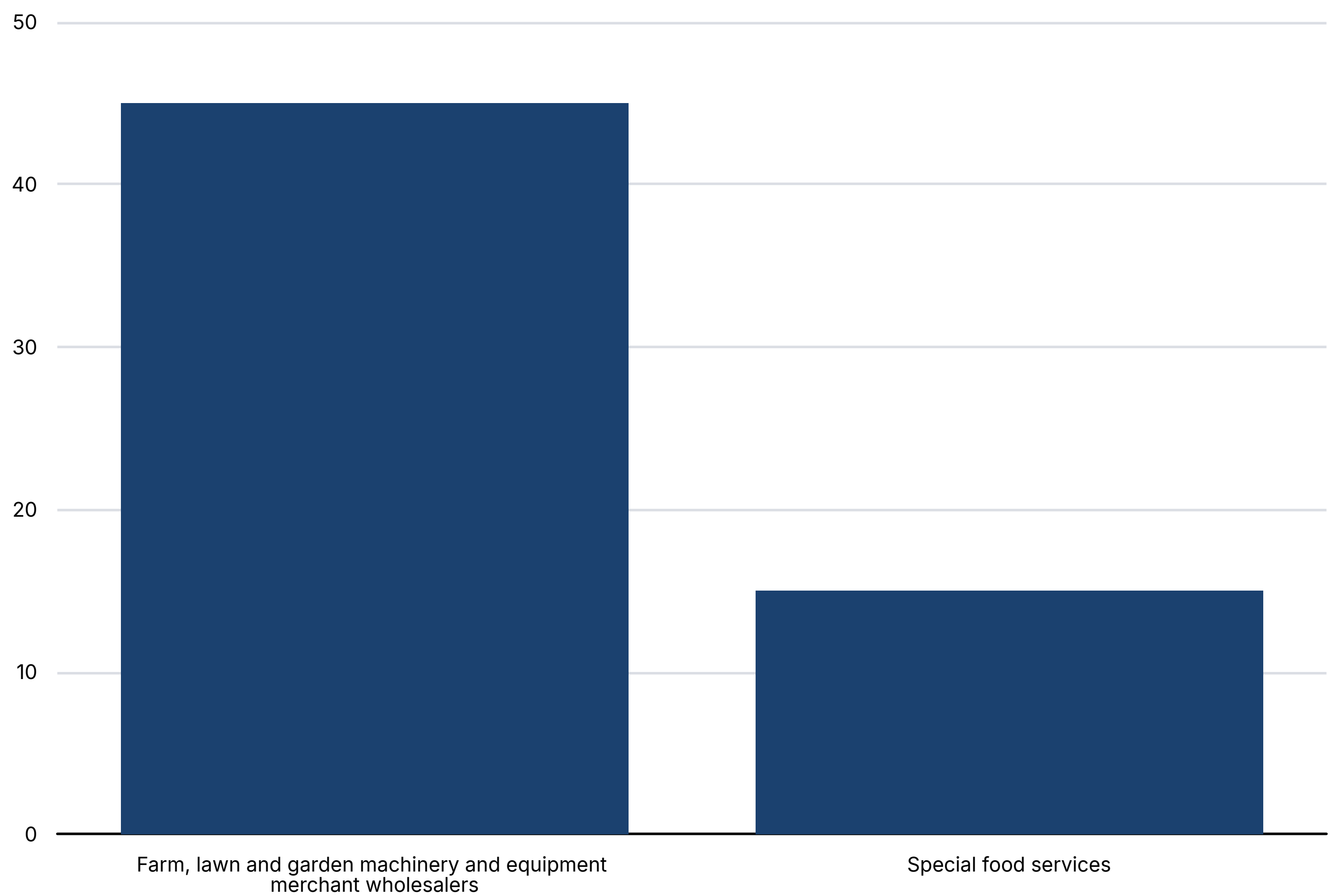

Figure 1.1: *Shows industries where employment has increased the most over the selected time period. It helps identify where job growth is strongest in the local economy. (Wainwright, 2024)[1]*

Largest Industries

In 2025, elementary and secondary schools remained Wainwright's largest employer, with 1,947 people. Specialty hospitals grew to 350, and support activities for mining and oil and gas extraction reached 194.

In 2025, Wainwright's largest employment group was elementary and secondary schools, with 1,947 people. That makes education the clearest anchor in the local job mix, well ahead of the other industries shown. The next largest group was specialty hospitals, with 350 people, followed by full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places at 304. Several other industries were smaller but showed sharper movement. Support activities for mining and oil and gas extraction employed 194 people, up 37.6% over one year and 158.7% over five years. Community care facilities for the elderly reached 160 people, rising 65.0% in the past year. Utility system construction also grew to 161 people, while specialized freight trucking fell to 126. Compared with the rest of the list, education stands out for size and steady growth, while the fastest gains are concentrated in health care and resource-linked services. The pattern suggests a local employment base that is broadening beyond its largest anchor, with several smaller industries changing quickly even as schools remain the dominant source of jobs.

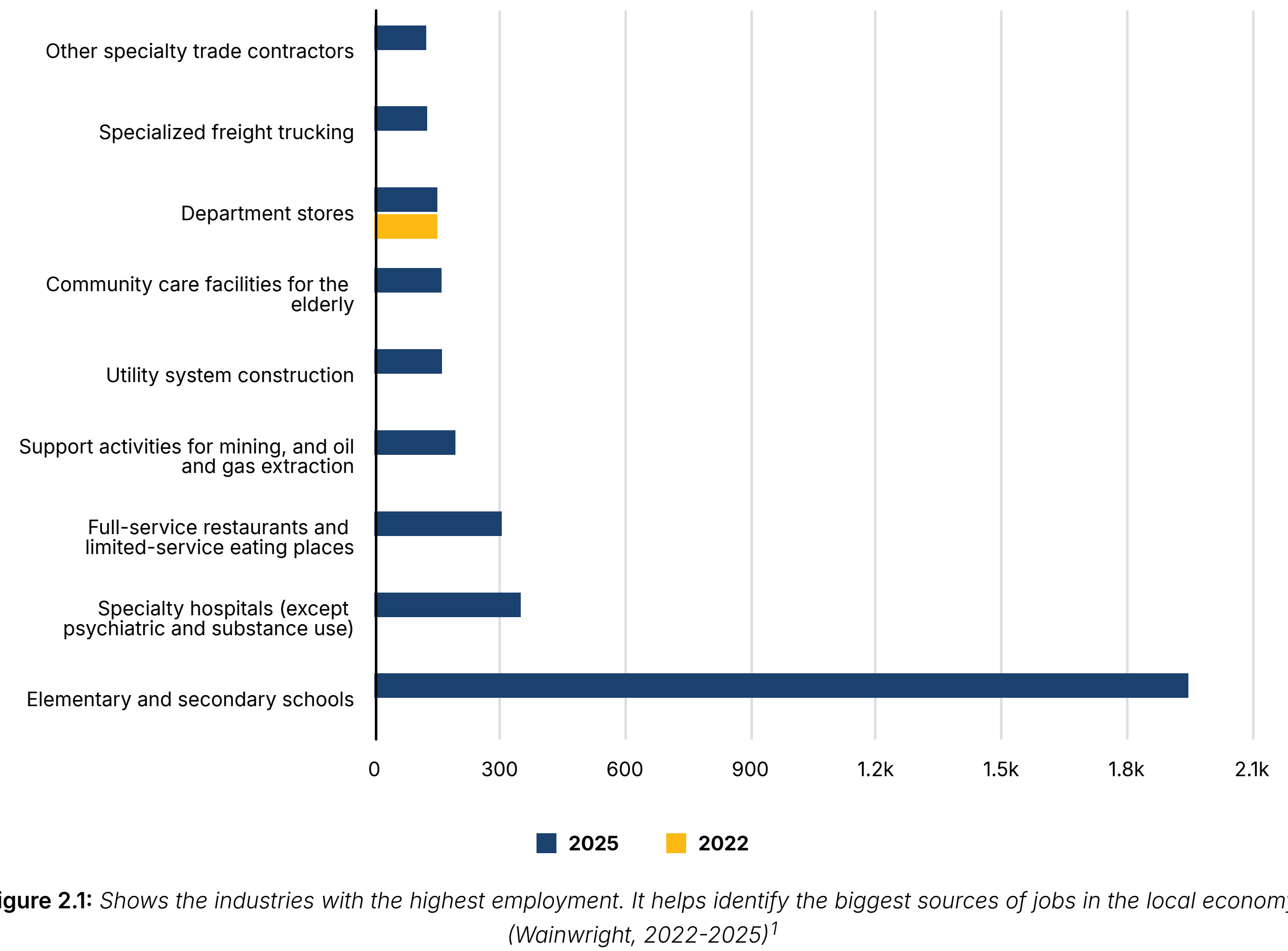

Figure 2.1: *Shows the industries with the highest employment. It helps identify the biggest sources of jobs in the local economy. (Wainwright, 2022-2025)*[1]

Declining Industries

Wainwright's largest declining industry was traveller accommodation, with 14 people in 2025, down 81.1% from a year earlier and 17.7% over five years. Smaller declines included legal services and florists, with 1 person each.

Wainwright's declining industries are concentrated in a few very small categories, with traveller accommodation standing out as the largest job base among the groups shown. In 2025, it employed 14 people, yet it also recorded one of the sharpest drops, down 81.1% from a year earlier and 17.7% over five years. The other industries in the list were each down to just 1 employee. Legal services fell 83.3% year over year and 87.5% over five years, while florists dropped 87.5% in the latest year. Motion picture and video industries was down 90.0% in 2024, and glass and glass product manufacturing declined 80.0% in 2023. The pattern suggests that the biggest losses are not spread across large employers, but are concentrated in small, narrow industries. Even the largest group remains small in absolute terms, which limits the scale of employment tied to these sectors. For the local economy, the data points to weak employment depth in these industries rather than broad-based job loss within one large segment.

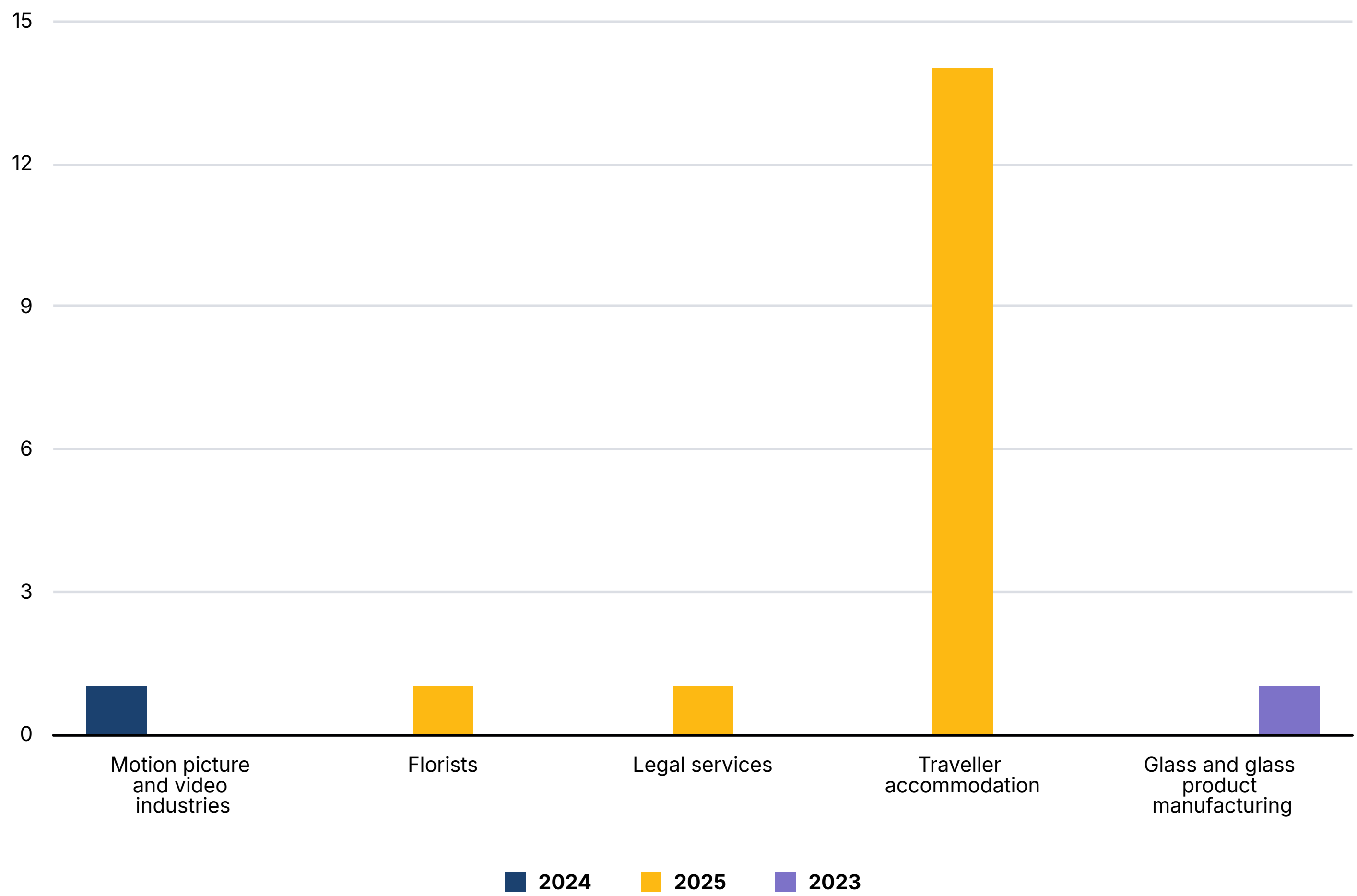

Figure 3.1: *Shows industries where employment has decreased the most over the selected time period. It helps identify parts of the local economy that are losing jobs. (Wainwright, 2023-2025)*[1]

Employment by Sector

Wainwright's largest employment sector in 2025 was educational services, with 1,948 people, up 2.2% yearly and 6.0% over five years. Health care, social assistance, and retail trade followed.

Wainwright's employment mix is led by educational services, which remained the largest sector in 2025 with 1,948 workers. This was up 2.2% from the previous year and 6.0% over five years, indicating steady, moderate growth rather than rapid expansion. Health care and social assistance was the second-largest employer at 863 workers, posting a stronger 30.4% recent increase and a 62.5% gain over five years. Retail trade and construction also remained significant, employing 699 and 406 people respectively, while accommodation and food services reached 335 workers after a notable five-year increase of 49.6%. Several smaller sectors changed quickly. Wholesale trade rose to 163 workers in 2025, more than tripling over five years, and finance and insurance grew to 102 workers after a 47.8% one-year jump. In contrast, manufacturing fell to 61 workers, and transportation and warehousing declined 41.0% over the past year despite being little changed over five years.

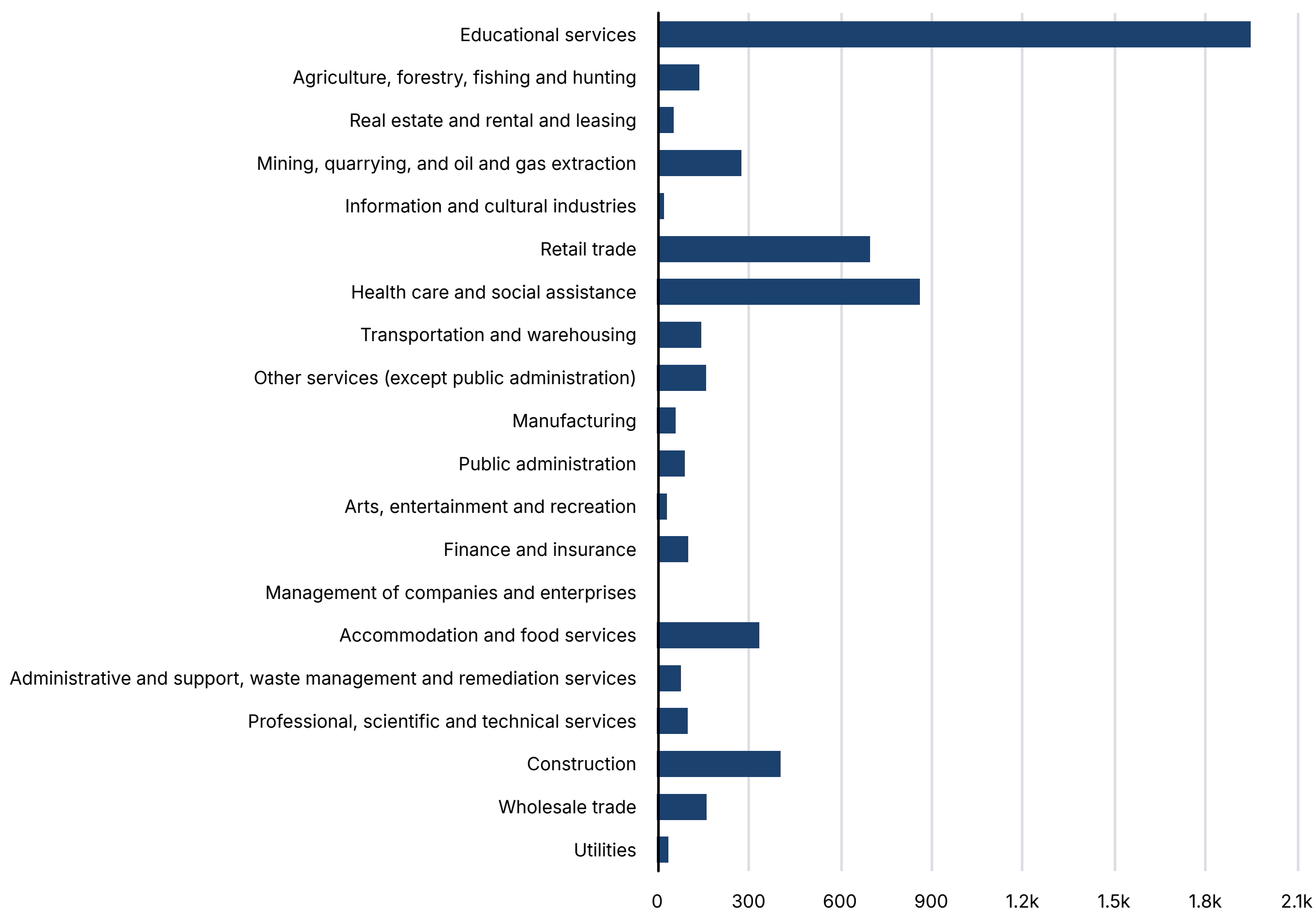

Figure 4.1: *Shows how employment is distributed across industry sectors. It helps indicate which sectors account for the largest share of local jobs. (Wainwright, 2025)*[1]

Establishments by Sector

In 2025, Wainwright's largest sector was agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, with 224 businesses, little changed from 2024 but up 40.9% from five years earlier. Real estate and rental and leasing followed with 223 businesses.

Wainwright's business base in 2025 is led by agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, with 224 establishments, narrowly ahead of real estate and rental and leasing at 223. Construction is the next largest sector at 100, followed by other services at 93 and retail trade at 83. Overall, the mix points to a business structure shaped by a few large sectors and a longer tail of smaller ones. Recent movement has been uneven. Agriculture was essentially flat from 2024 to 2025, slipping 0.4% after a 40.9% rise over five years. Real estate kept edging upward, growing 8.3% in the latest year and 38.5% over five years. Professional, scientific and technical services also expanded strongly, reaching 71 establishments, up 12.7% in the year and 73.2% over five years. Some sectors softened: retail trade fell 6.7%, transportation and warehousing declined 5.9%, and information and cultural industries dropped to 5.

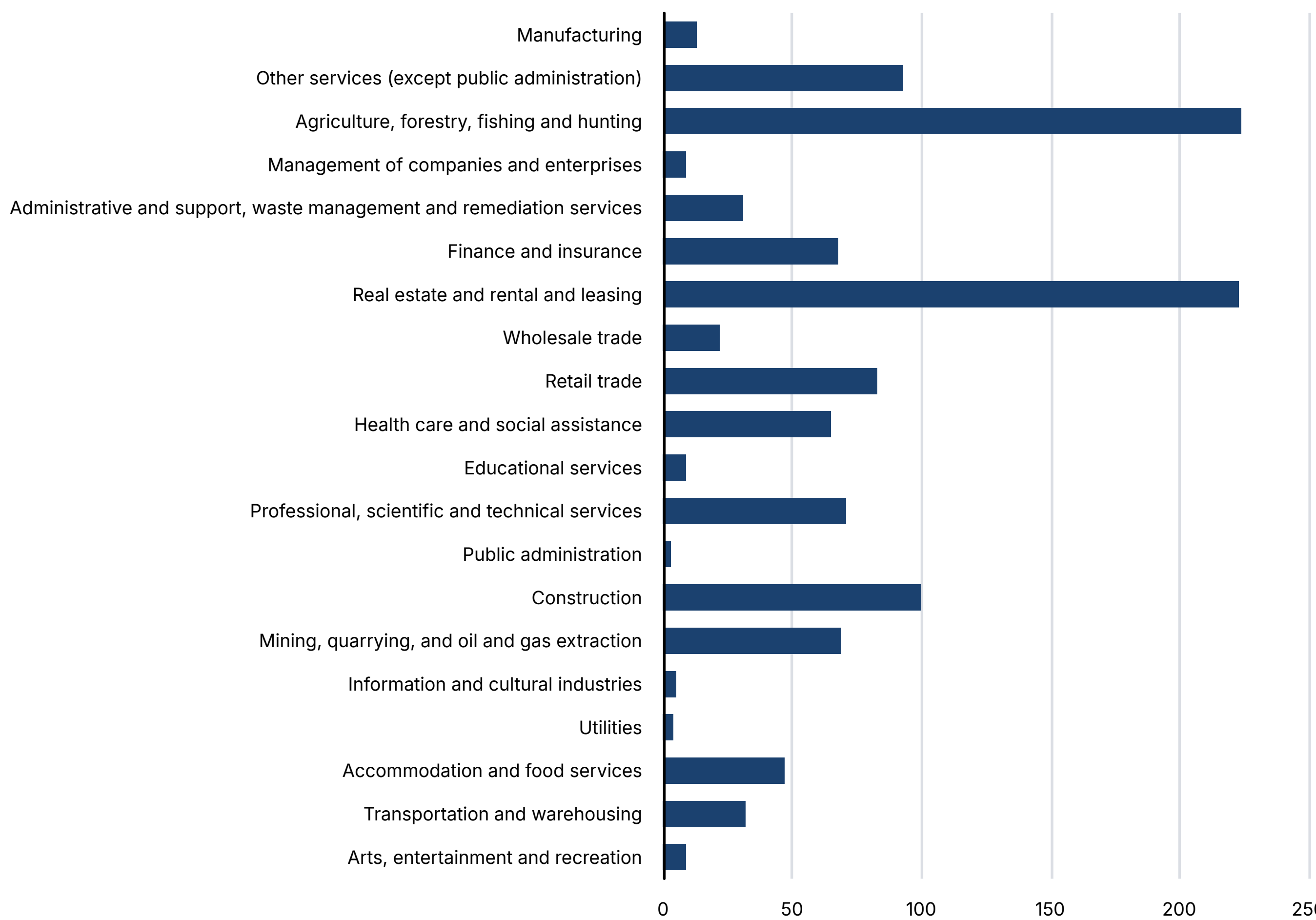

Figure 5.1: *Shows how business establishments are distributed across sectors. It helps indicate the sector mix of the local business base. (Wainwright, 2025)*[2]

Business Establishments

Wainwright had 1,289 business establishments in 2025, up 1.2% from 2024 and 38.0% above 2020. After dipping to 906 in 2021, the count rebounded to 1,281 in 2022, eased in 2023, then recovered in 2024 and 2025.

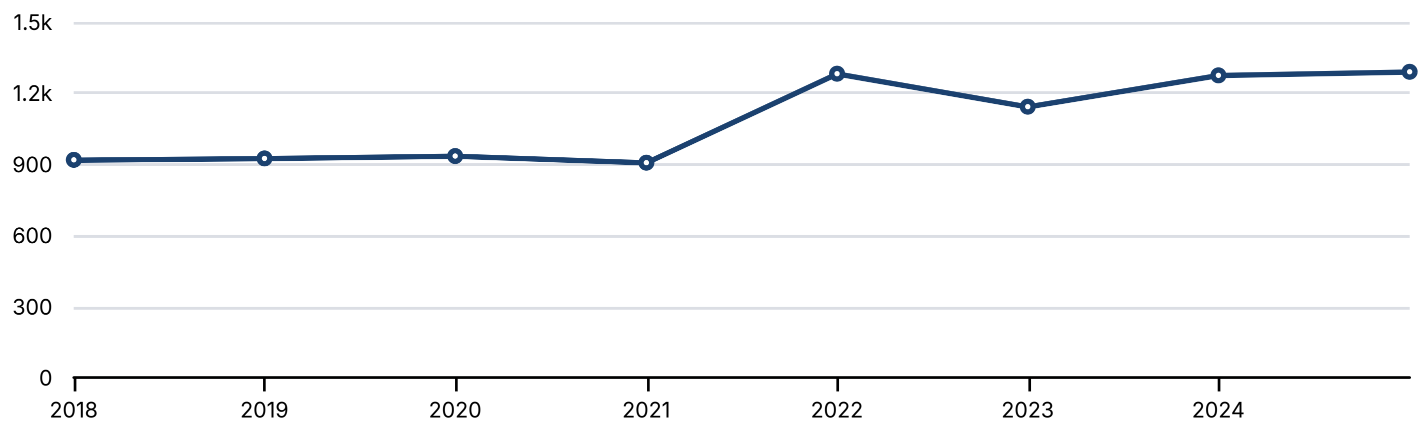

Figure 6.1: *Shows the total number of active business establishments in the area, including those without employees. It helps indicate the scale and diversity of the local business base. (Wainwright, 2018-2025)*[2]

Wainwright's business base stands at 1,289 active establishments in 2025. The series shows a fairly steady level through 2020, a dip in 2021, and then a sharp jump in 2022 that reshaped the local total. From 2018 to 2021, the count moved from 918 to 906 businesses, with small gains in 2019 and 2020 before a 3.0% decline in 2021. The biggest change came in 2022, when the total rose to 1,281 businesses, up 41.4% from the year before. After that surge, the count eased to 1,142 in 2023, then recovered to 1,274 in 2024 and 1,289 in 2025. The longer view is clearly stronger than the short setback. Over five years, Wainwright is up 38.0%, and the latest year still posted a 1.2% increase. That pattern suggests a local business base that expanded quickly after 2021 and then held most of those gains.

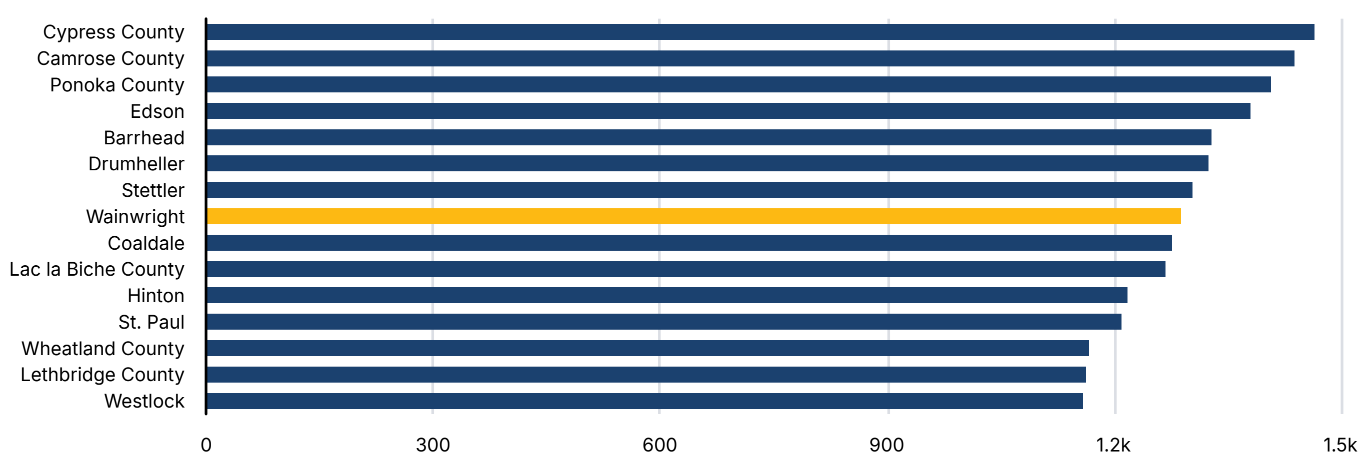

Figure 6.2: *Comparison of Business Establishments with other locations (Wainwright, 2025)*[2]

Establishments by Size

Wainwright's business base in 2025 was led by establishments without employees, at 876 businesses, while 1 to 4 employee firms numbered 208 and 5 to 9 employee firms numbered 88. The largest group was up 3.9% from 2024 and 41.3% from 2020, while the 100 to 199 employee group fell to 2 businesses, down 33.3% from 2024 and 50.0% from 2020.

Wainwright's 2025 business base is dominated by very small establishments. There are 876 businesses with no employees, by far the largest category and a major factor shaping the local economy's size profile. The next largest group is firms with 1 to 4 employees, totaling 208 establishments. Together, these two categories make up most local businesses, while mid-sized and larger firms are far less common. There are 88 establishments with 5 to 9 employees, 65 with 10 to 19, and 35 with 20 to 49. The numbers drop sharply after that, with 12 businesses in the 50 to 99 range, 2 in the 100 to 199 range, 2 in the 200 to 499 range, and 1 with 500 or more employees. Over five years, growth has been strongest among the smallest firms. No-employee businesses are up 41.3% since 2020, and the 20 to 49 employee group has grown 94.4%. In contrast, the 100 to 199 employee group has declined by 50%.

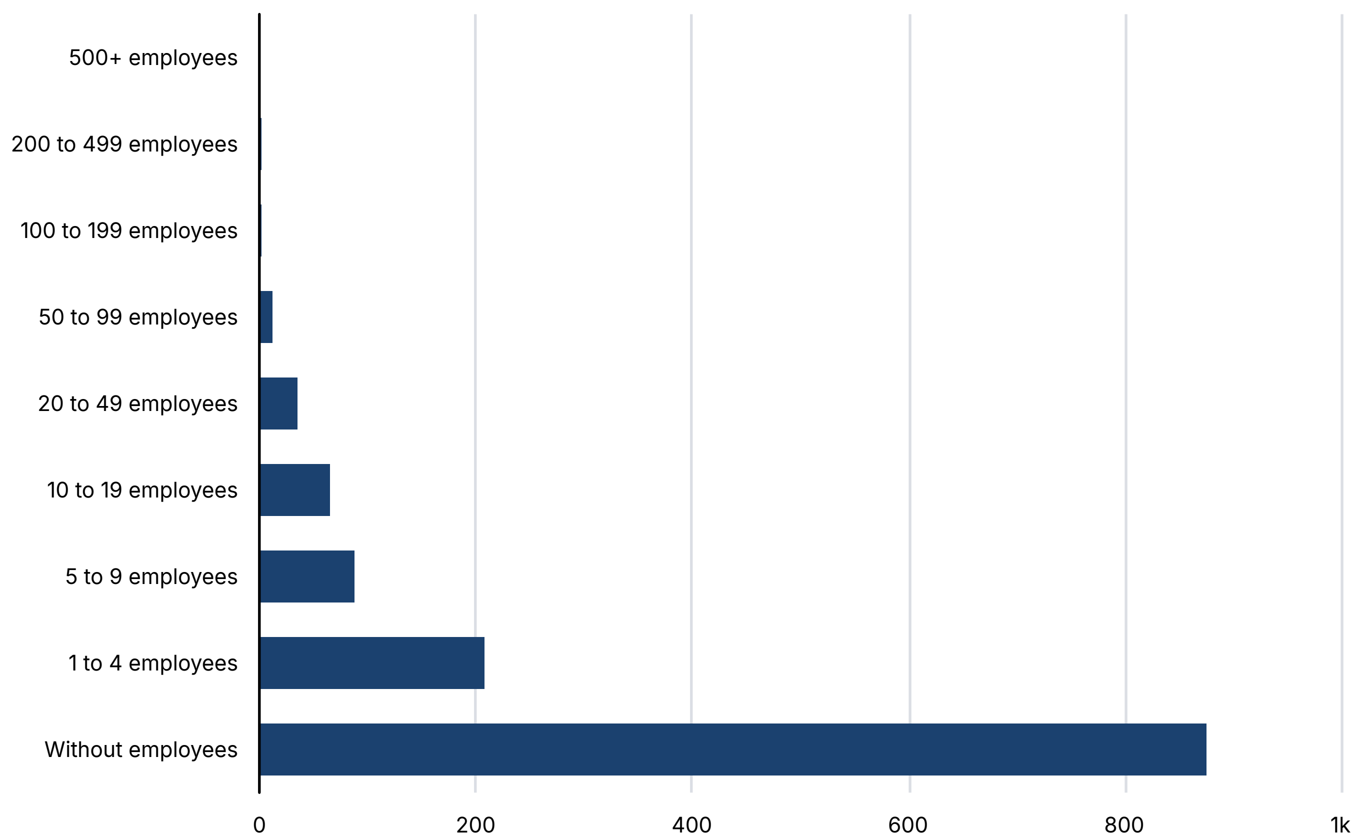

Figure 7.1: *Shows how businesses are distributed by number of employees. It helps indicate whether the local economy is dominated by very small, small, or larger firms. (Wainwright, 2025)*[2]

Fastest Growing Sectors

Finance and insurance is Wainwright's largest and most changed sector, with 102 people in 2025, up 47.8% in one year and 36.0% over five years. Utilities also grew to 37 people, up 42.3% and 94.7% respectively.

In Wainwright, the fastest-growing sectors are spread across both goods-producing and service industries, with 2025 showing especially strong gains in finance and insurance. That sector has 102 people, making it the largest group in this set and also the one with the most change overall. Other sectors also posted sizable employment bases or sharp short-term increases. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting reached 245 people in 2022 and rose 81.5% over one year. Transportation and warehousing had 244 people in 2024 and increased 71.8% over the same period. Professional, scientific and technical services stood at 111 people in 2024, with 35.4% one-year growth. Utilities is smaller at 37 people, but it shows the strongest longer-term change, up 94.7% over five years and 42.3% in the most recent year. Finance and insurance also grew 36.0% over five years, suggesting its recent expansion is part of a broader upward trend.

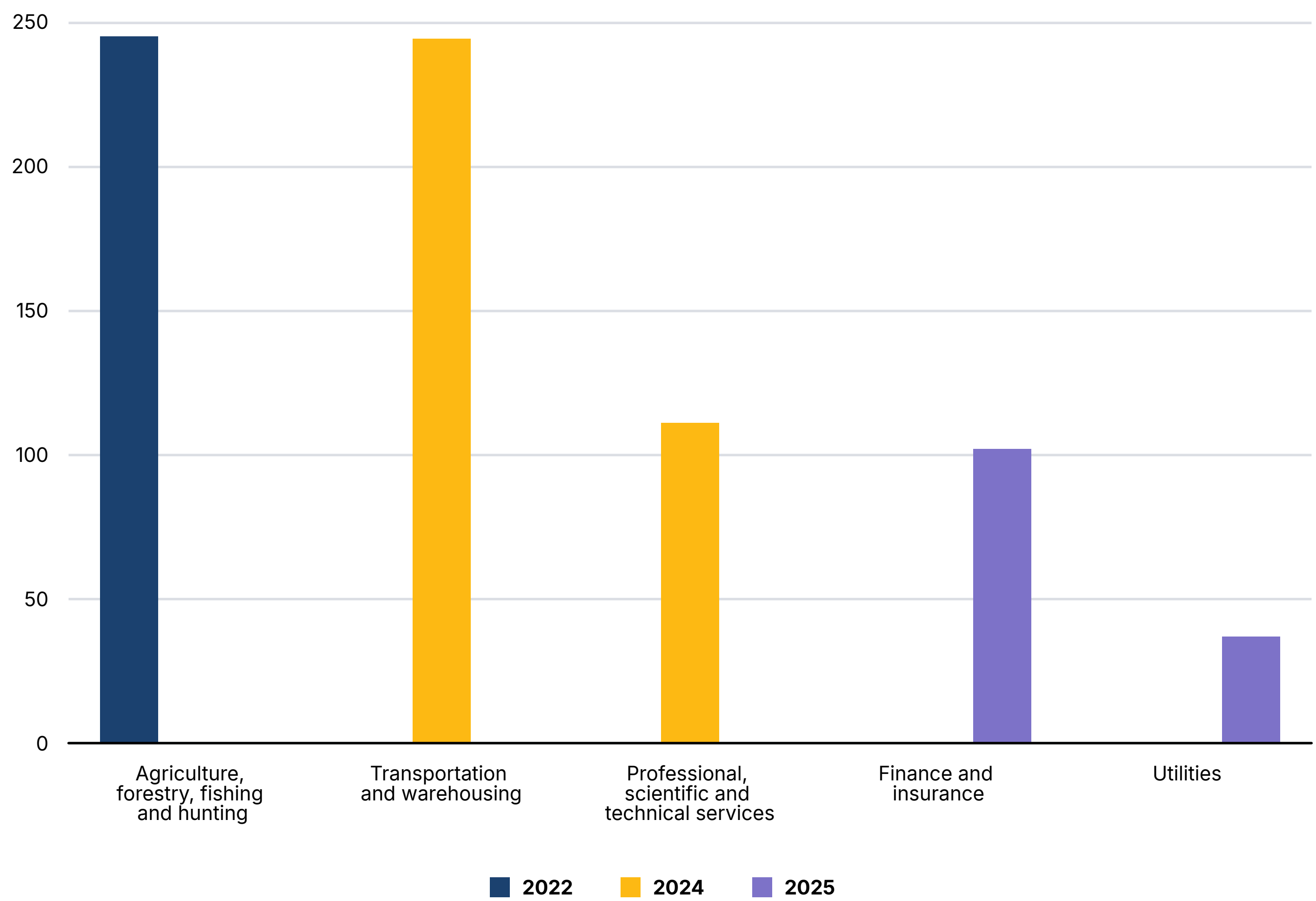

Figure 8.1: *Shows sectors where employment has increased the most over the selected time period. It helps identify the main drivers of job growth in the local economy. (Wainwright, 2022-2025)*[1]

Largest Sectors

In 2025, Wainwright's largest sector was educational services, employing 1,948 people. Health care and social assistance grew fastest to 863, while retail trade had 699, construction 406, and accommodation and food services 335.

In Wainwright, employment among people aged 15 and over is led by educational services, which employs 1,948 people in 2025. Health care and social assistance is the next largest sector at 863, followed by retail trade with 699. These three sectors anchor the local employment profile and are far larger than the others listed. The recent trend is mixed. Educational services has grown modestly, rising 2.2% over one year and 6.0% over five years. Health care and social assistance has expanded much faster, up 30.4% in the past year and 62.5% over five years. Retail trade has also grown strongly over five years, increasing 57.4%, even though it slipped 2.9% in the latest year. Construction employs 406 people and is slightly down over one year, while accommodation and food services, at 335, fell 19.3% in the past year despite a 49.6% five-year increase. Overall, employment is concentrated in a few service sectors, with especially strong long-term growth in health care and retail.

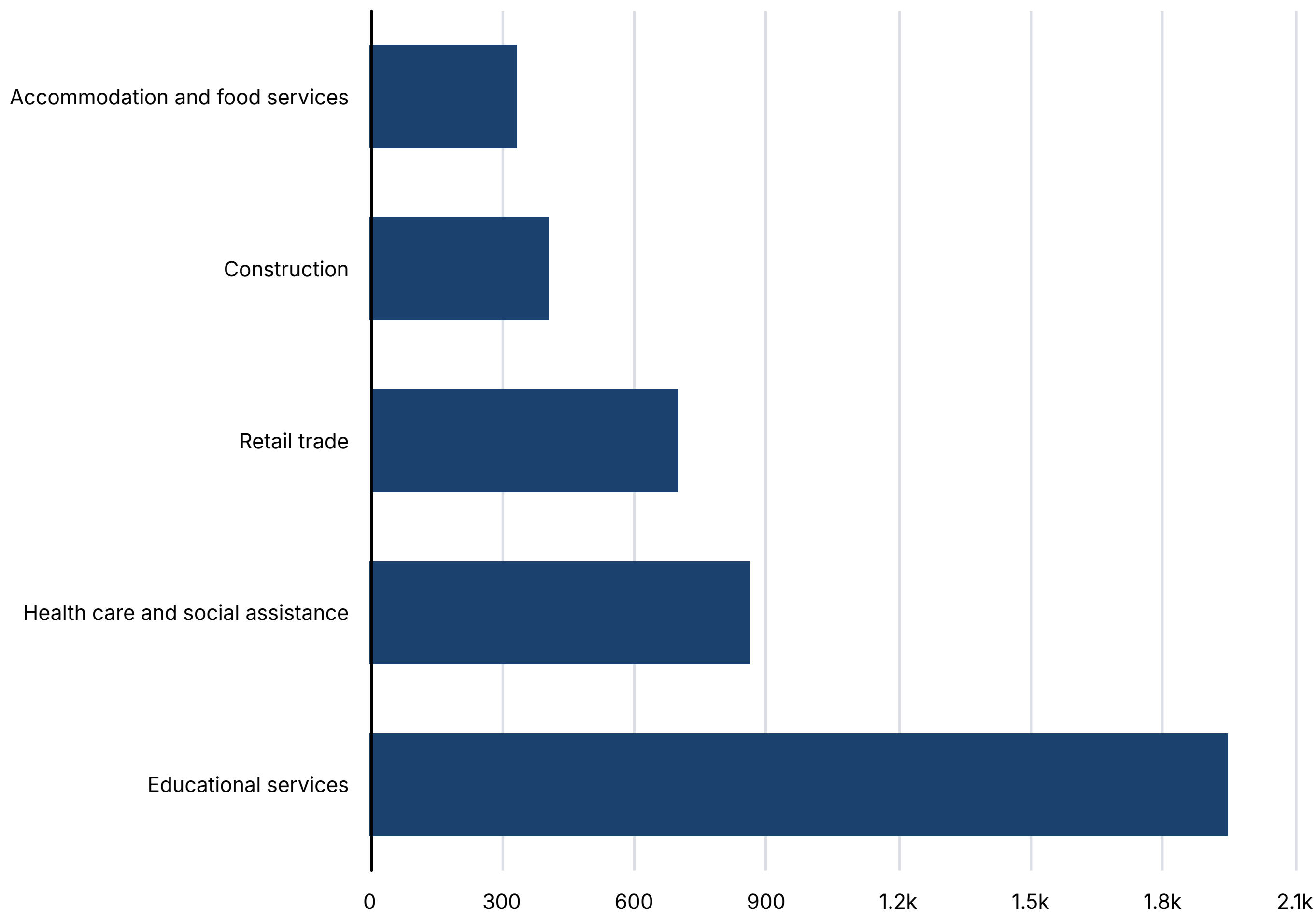

Figure 9.1: *Shows the sectors employing the most people. It helps identify the largest pillars of the local economy. (Wainwright, 2025)*[1]

Specialist Sectors

Wainwright's most specialized sector is educational services at 4.3, though concentration fell 1.7% year over year and 9.6% over five years. Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction follows at 4.0, while utilities grew fastest.

Wainwright's specialist sectors in 2025 are marked by a clear concentration in a few areas of employment. Educational services is the strongest, with a location quotient of 4.3, followed closely by mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction at 4.0. Health care and social assistance also sits above the national benchmark at 1.2, while agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting and utilities are just above parity at 1.1 each. The recent changes show a mixed picture. Educational services declined 1.7% over the past year and 9.6% over five years. By contrast, mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction rose 23.5% in one year and 47.8% over five years. Health care and social assistance increased 24.9% and 33.2%, and utilities posted the sharpest gains, up 39.6% in one year and 98.0% over five years. This mix suggests that Wainwright's employment concentration is not confined to one stable cluster. Some specialized sectors have weakened, while others have expanded quickly. The result is a local economy with both enduring and changing points of specialization.

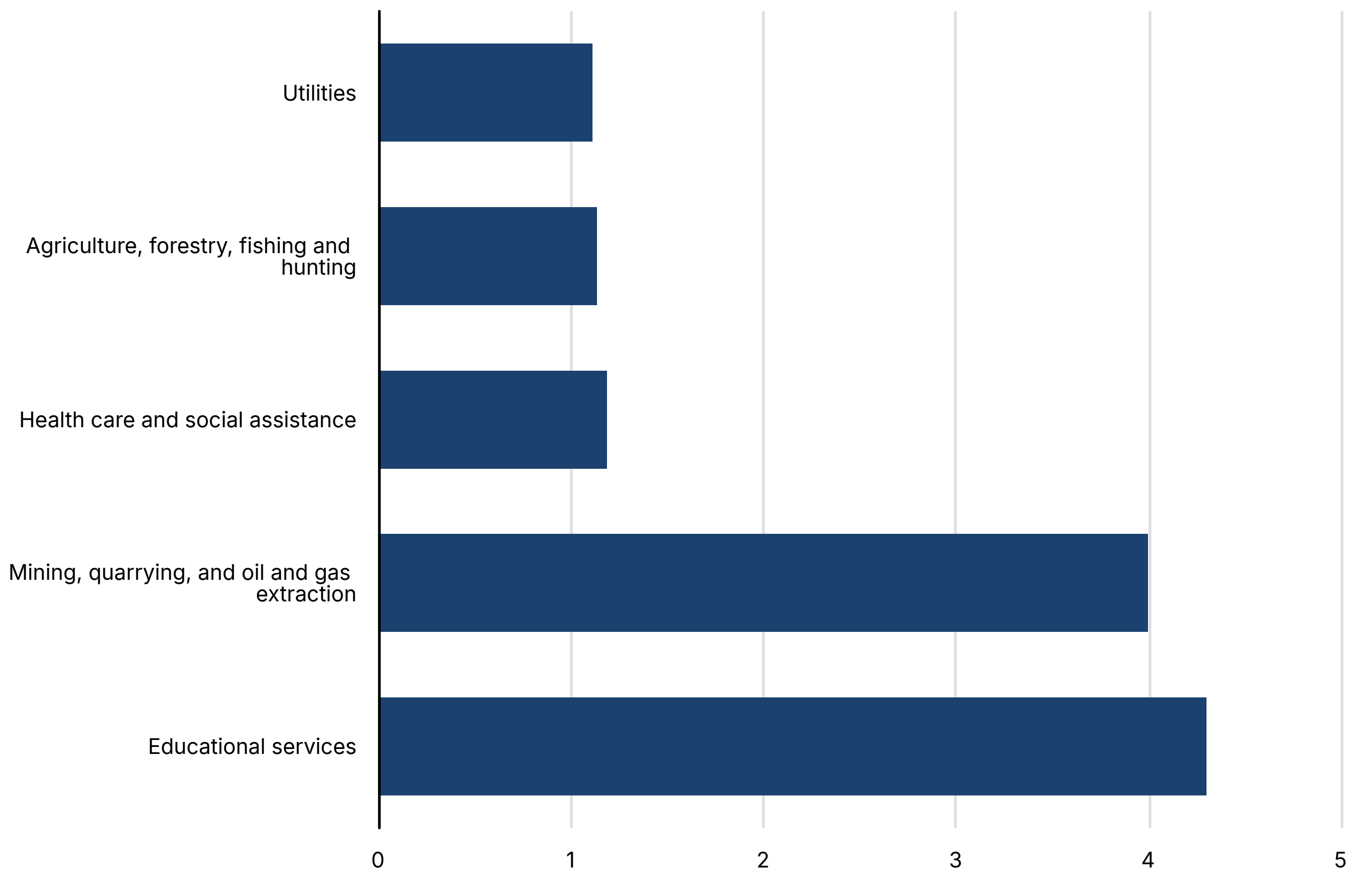

Figure 10.1: *Shows sectors where the local economy has the highest level of specialization based on employment concentration compared with the national average. Sectors are categorized based on specialization (location quotient) and recent employment growth or change in concentration. (Wainwright, 2025)*[3]

Star Sectors

Wainwright's largest specialized sector in 2025 was mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction at 4.0, up 23.5% in one year and 47.8% over five years. Educational services ranked highest in 2023 at 4.7, while utilities posted the fastest five-year increase, rising 98.0% to 1.1.

Wainwright's star sectors show a local economy with a few clear areas of specialization, led by mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction. In 2025, that group posted a location quotient of 3.9977, with 1-year growth in concentration of 23.46% and 5-year growth of 47.84%. Utilities also stood out at 1.1135, but its concentration rose much more sharply over time, with 39.59% growth in the past year and 98.03% over five years. Health care and social assistance remained specialized as well, at 1.1884 in 2025, after gains of 24.92% over 1 year and 33.17% over 5 years. Earlier entries point to similar movement in other sectors, including educational services at 4.6740 in 2023 and retail trade at 1.1239 that same year. The pattern is one of concentration that is not static. Mining remains the strongest anchor, while utilities and health care show faster recent gains in specialization. That combination suggests Wainwright's employment base is both concentrated and still changing across several sectors.

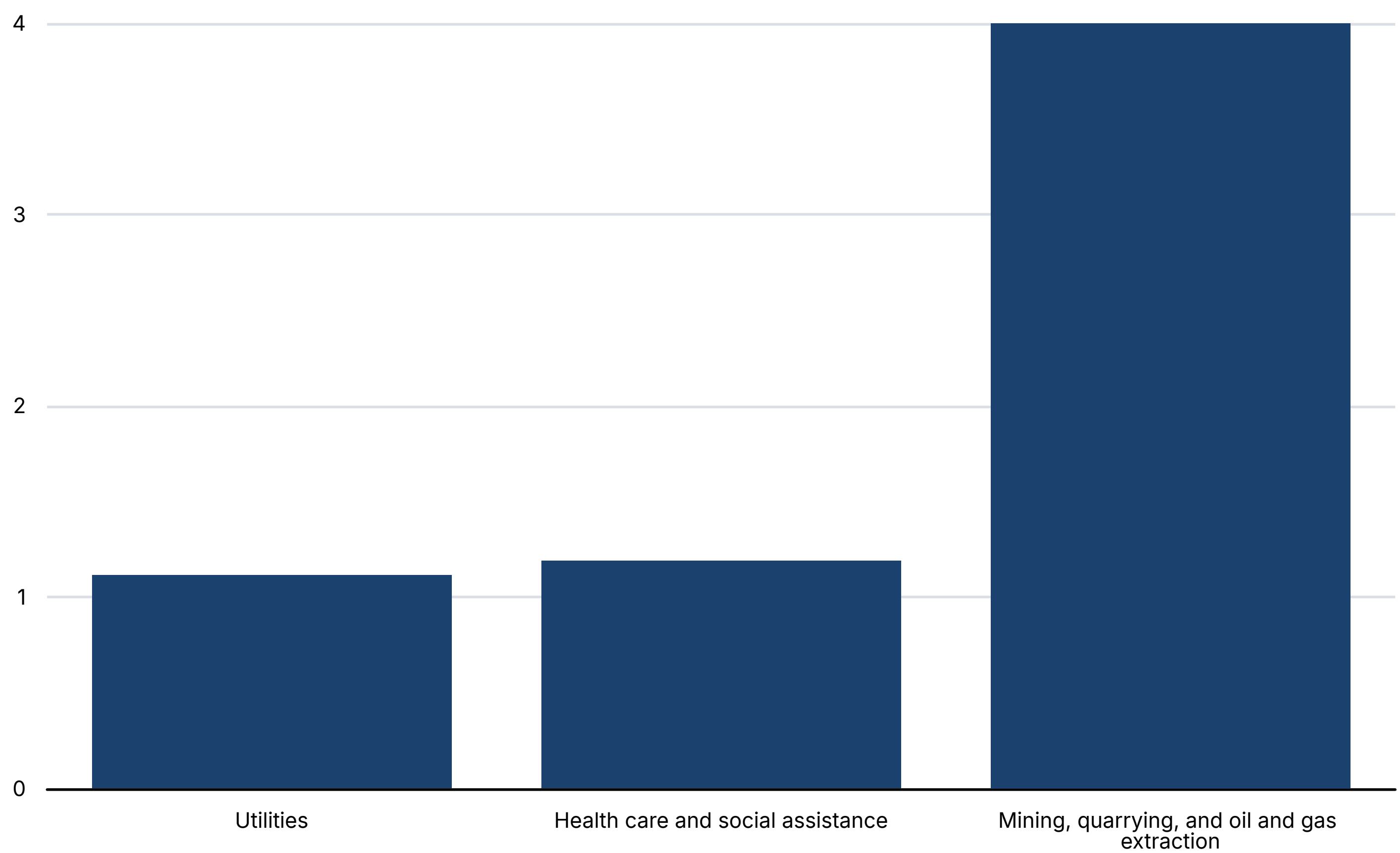

Figure 11.1: *Shows major industry sectors where the local economy has strong specialization and increasing concentration or strong growth. Sectors are categorized based on specialization (location quotient) and recent employment growth or change in concentration. (Wainwright, 2025)*[3]

Anchor Sectors

Wainwright's largest anchor sector is educational services, with a location quotient of 4.3 in 2025, down 1.7% from a year earlier and 9.6% over five years. Retail trade is much closer to the local average at 1.1, but it rose 43.6% over five years despite a 1.7% annual decline.

Wainwright's anchor sectors indicate a local economy with a few clearly specialized industries, led by educational services. In 2025, educational services had the highest location quotient at 4.3, making it the strongest concentration in the dataset. Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction followed at 3.2, while agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting and retail trade were much closer to the benchmark at 1.1 each. Recent trends suggest easing concentration rather than expansion. Educational services slipped from 4.4 in 2024 to 4.3 in 2025, with a 1-year change of -1.7% and a 5-year change of -9.6%. Mining also softened, with a 1-year change of -5.5%. Agriculture was lower still, at 1.1 in 2025 after a 5-year change of -18.4%. Construction shows a sharper long-run decline, falling to 1.1 in 2025 with a 5-year change of -42.7%, despite only a -0.6% 1-year change.

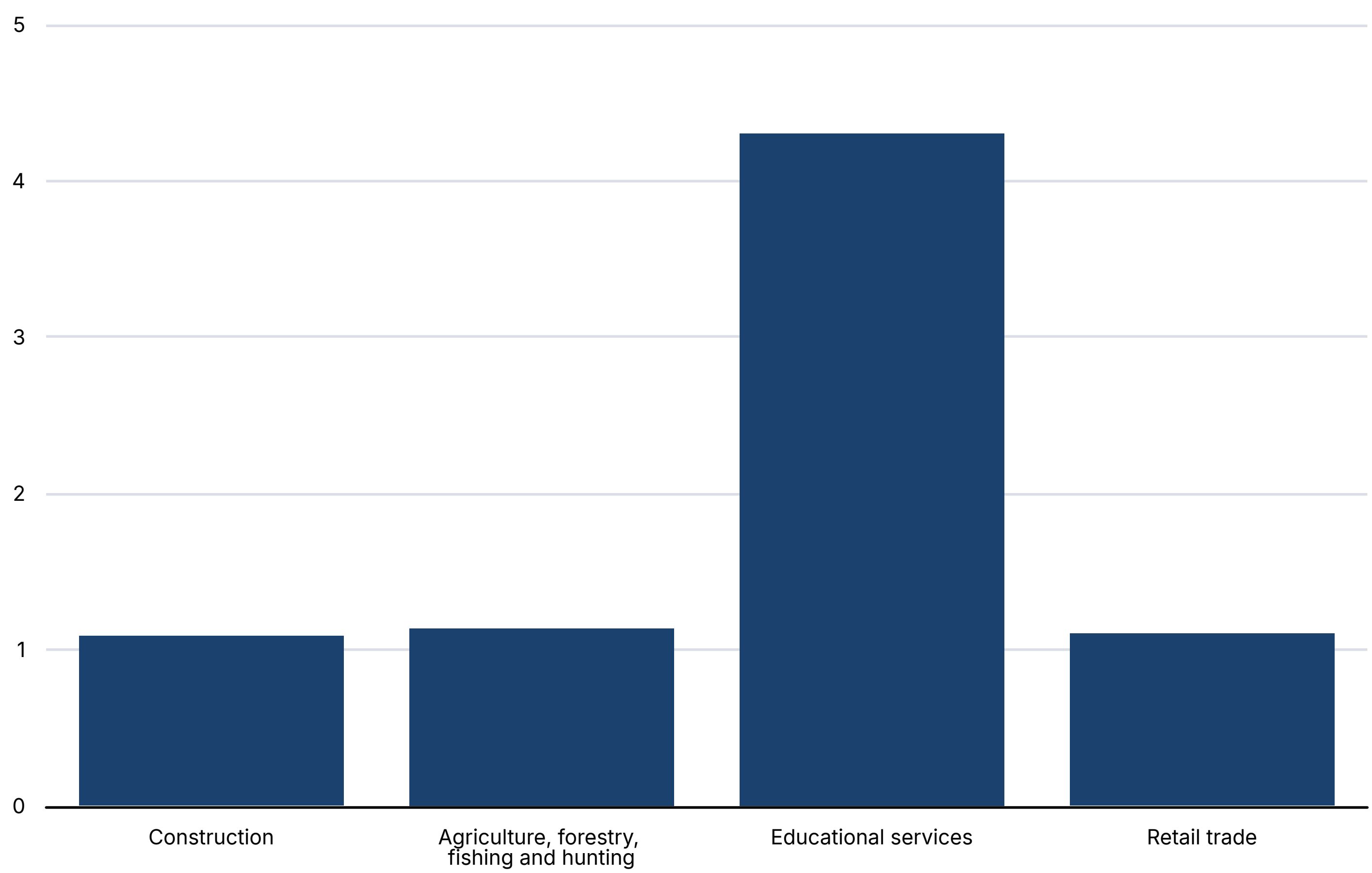

Figure 12.1: *Shows major industry sectors where the local economy has strong specialization but relatively stable or declining concentration over time. Sectors are categorized based on specialization (location quotient) and recent employment growth or change in concentration. (Wainwright, 2025)*[3]

Micro Establishments Share

In Wainwright, micro establishments were 98.2% of businesses in 2025, unchanged from 2024 and up 2.7 points from five years earlier. Agriculture also held 98.2%, while accommodation and food services rose to 57.4%.

Wainwright's business base is heavily tilted toward micro establishments, with many sectors showing very high shares of firms with 0 to 4 employees. In 2025, the pattern is especially pronounced in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and in real estate and rental and leasing, both at 98.2%. Professional, scientific and technical services is also high at 87.3%, while finance and insurance stands at 88.2%. Several other sectors are also well above the midpoint. Accommodation and food services is at 57.4%, health care and social assistance at 60.0%, manufacturing at 69.2%, and administrative and support services at 74.2%. At the lower end, public administration remains at 33.3%, with utilities at 50.0% and retail trade at 54.2%. Year-to-year changes are mixed. Accommodation and food services rose 20.3% in the past year, and retail trade increased 14.8%, while information and cultural industries fell 16.0%. Manufacturing also strengthened over five years, up 18.7%.

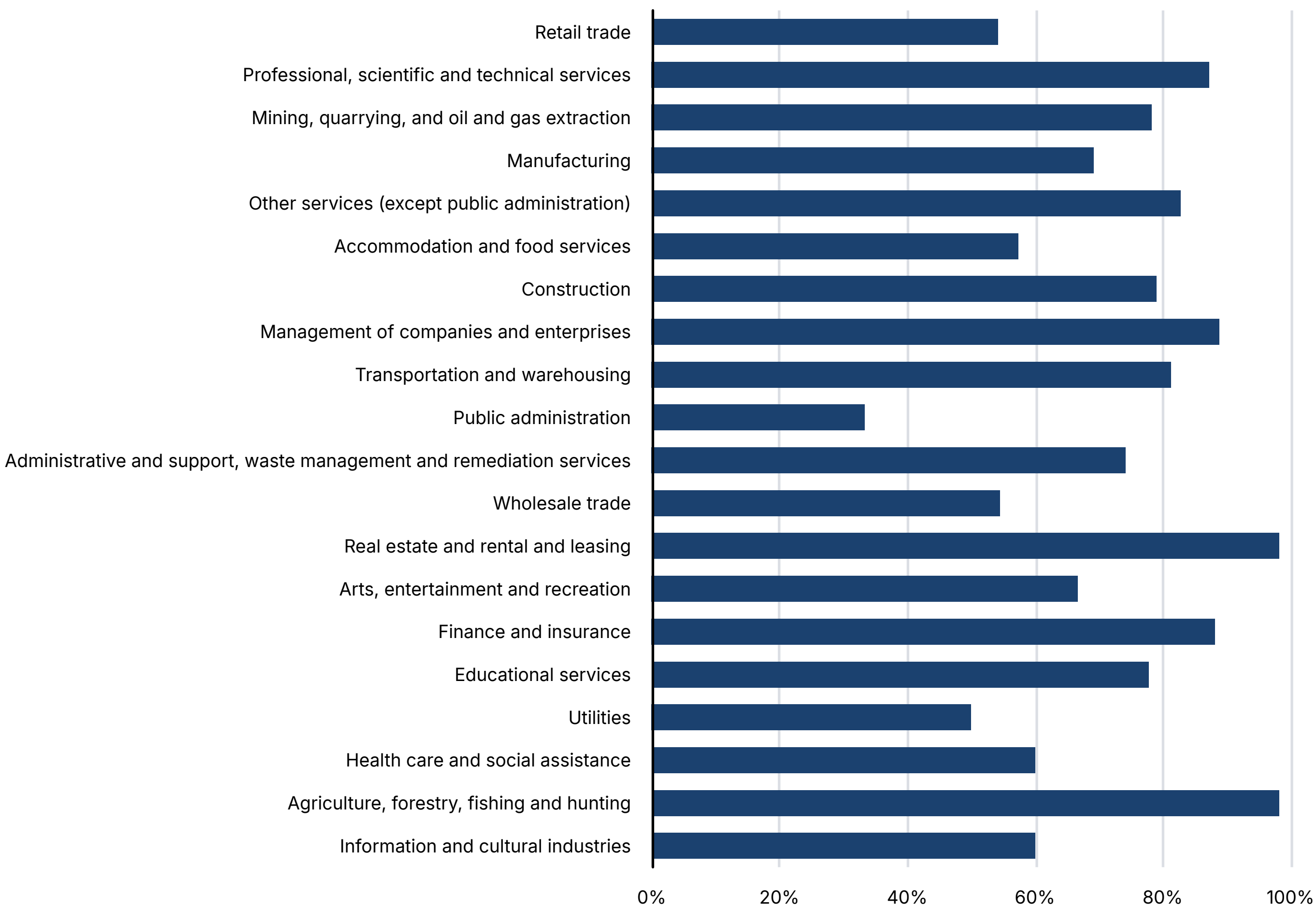

Figure 13.1: *Shows the share of businesses with 0 to 4 employees. It helps indicate how much the local business base is made up of very small firms. (Wainwright, 2025)*[4]

Resident Labour Force

In 2021, Wainwright's largest resident labour force was in public administration, with 565 people, down 1.7% from 2016. Health care and social assistance rose to 500, while retail trade fell to 485.

Wainwright's resident labour force in 2021 was spread across a broad mix of industries, but public administration remained the largest single employer at 565 people. Health care and social assistance followed closely at 500, with retail trade at 485 and construction at 290. Some of the most notable five-year gains were smaller in absolute terms but stronger in percentage growth: real estate and rental and leasing rose from 15 to 35 people, a 133.3% increase, while finance and insurance increased to 115, up 76.9%. Overall, the pattern shows stability in the largest sectors and sharper shifts in smaller ones. Public administration edged down from 575 in 2016 to 565 in 2021, and retail trade fell from 545 to 485. In contrast, transportation and warehousing grew from 155 to 200, and educational services rose from 150 to 180. The labour force remains anchored by public-facing services, while manufacturing declined to 50 people.

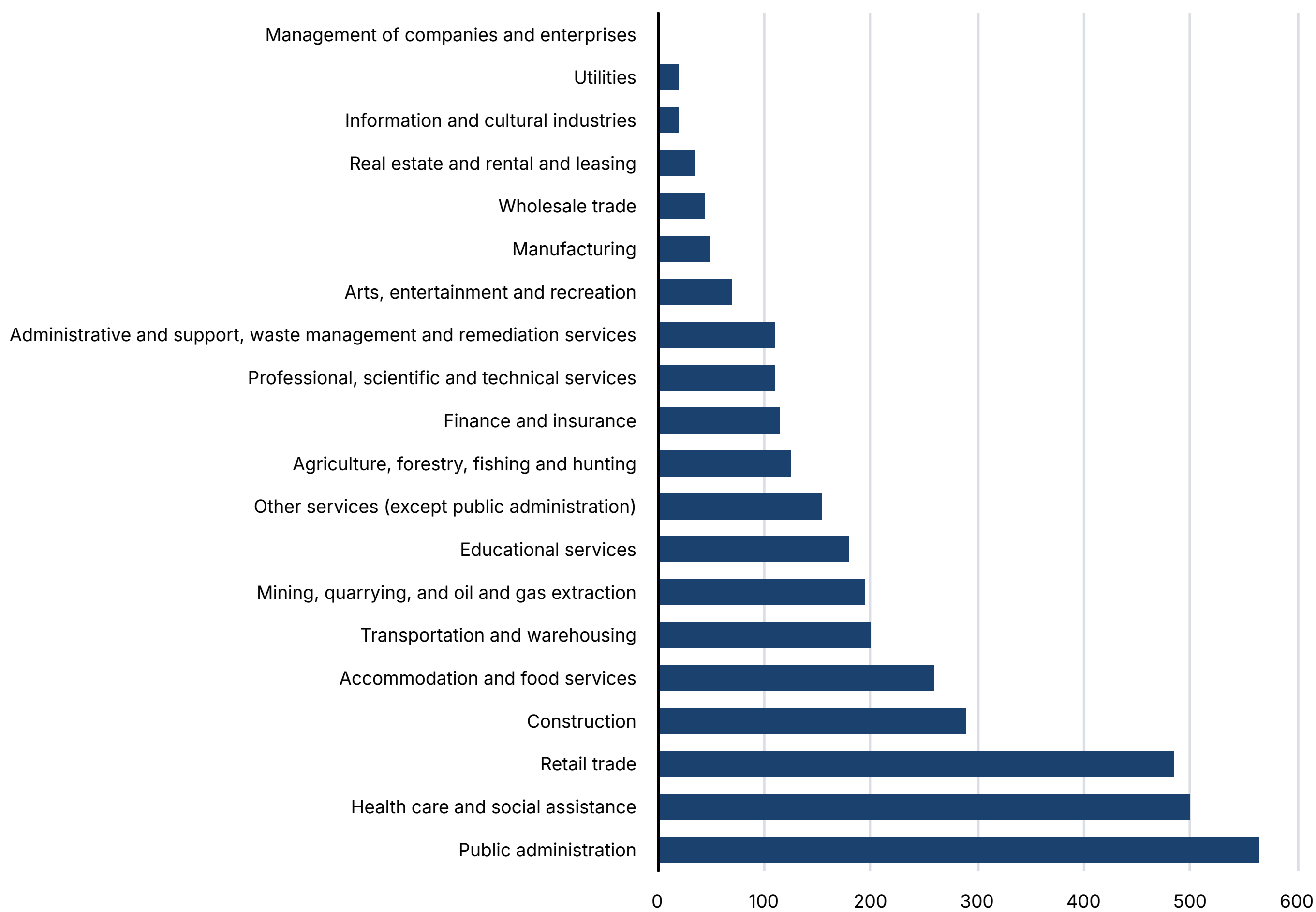

Figure 14.1: *Shows the number of residents who are in the labour force. It helps indicate the size of the locally available workforce. (Wainwright, 2021)*[5]

Labour Market Gap

Wainwright’s largest labour market gap in 2021 was in educational services at 11.1, far above every other industry. Wholesale trade followed at 2.7, information and cultural industries at 2.5, and manufacturing at 2.1, while public administration was the lowest at 0.1.

In 2021, Wainwright’s labour market gap was most pronounced in educational services, where the ratio reached 11.1. That was far above every other sector in the dataset and made education the clear outlier in the local labour market balance. Several other sectors also showed local job concentration relative to resident workers, but at much lower levels. Wholesale trade stood at 2.7, information and cultural industries at 2.5, manufacturing at 2.1, and construction at 1.8. Health care and social assistance was also above parity at 1.8. By contrast, many sectors were close to or below a ratio of 1.0, including transportation and warehousing at 0.5, professional, scientific and technical services at 0.4, and public administration at 0.1. Retail trade was 0.9, while finance and insurance and real estate each remained below 0.7. Overall, the pattern suggests a highly uneven labour market, dominated by education rather than a broad-based surplus across sectors.

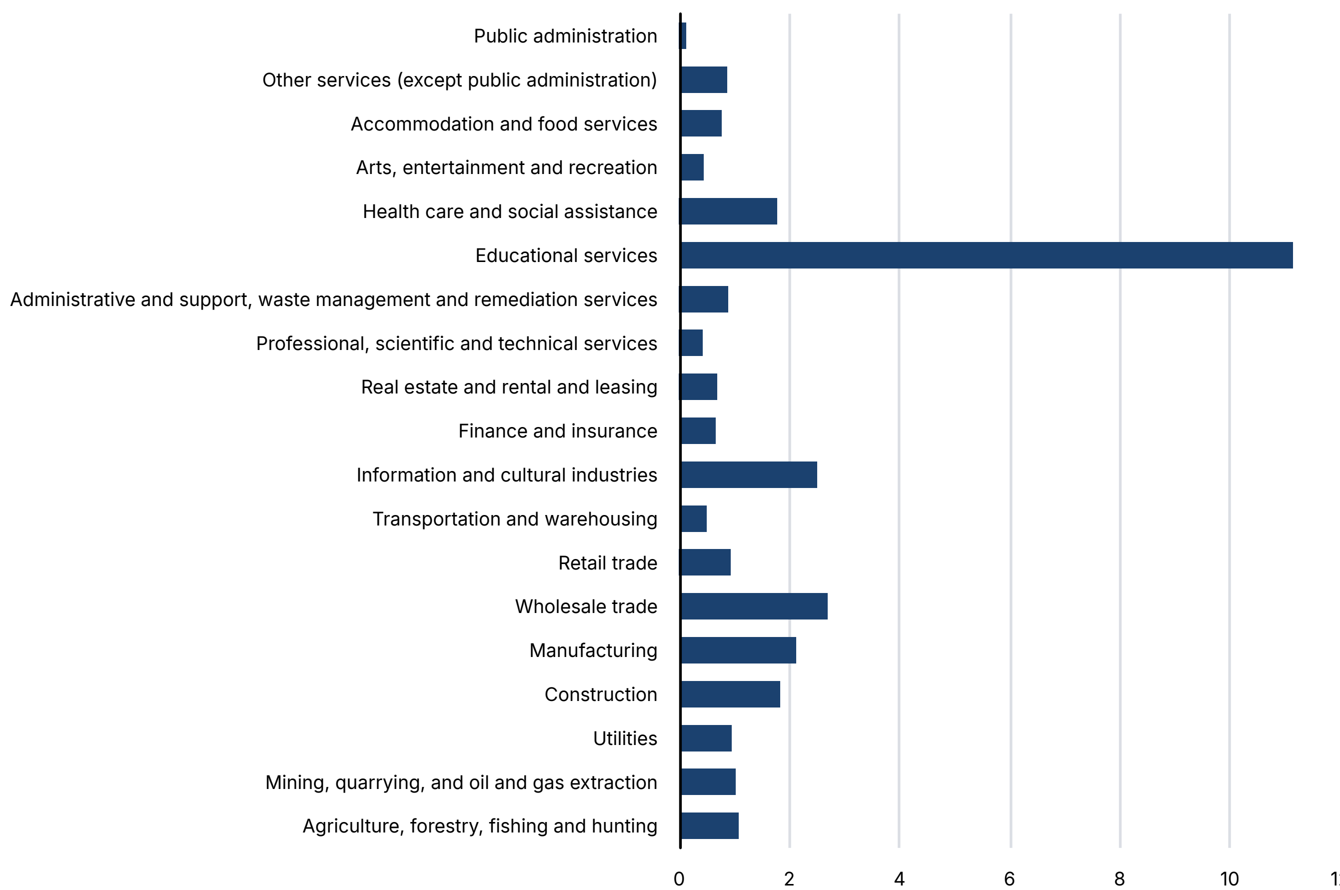

Figure 15.1: *Shows the gap between the number of local jobs and the number of resident workers across all sectors. It helps indicate whether the area attracts workers in or sends workers out. (Wainwright, 2021)*[6]

Data Sources

1. Statistics Canada, Business Register; Localintel, Employment by Industry Estimates of Census Areas. Published in Mar 13, 2026.
2. Statistics Canada, Business Register. Published in Jun 1, 2025.
3. Statistics Canada, Business Register; Localintel, Employment Location Quotient by Industry Estimates of Census Areas. Published in Mar 13, 2026.
4. Statistics Canada, Business Register; Localintel, Micro Establishments Share of Census Areas. Published in Mar 13, 2026.
5. Statistics Canada, Census Profile. Published in Dec 15, 2022.
6. Statistics Canada, Business Register; Statistics Canada, Census Profile; Localintel, Labour Market Gap Estimates of Census Areas. Published in Mar 13, 2026.