



# 2023 CANADIAN CAMPGROUND SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT

RECREATION VEHICLE DEALERS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA & THE CANADIAN RECREATIONAL VEHICLE ASSOCIATION  
DECEMBER 2024

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The 2023 Campground Survey, commissioned by the Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association of Canada (RVDA) and the Canadian Recreational Vehicle Association (CRVA), offers critical insights into the economic and operational landscape of privately operated campgrounds across Canada. Conducted in late 2023, the survey included responses from 301 campgrounds and focused on assessing revenue, expenses, employment, and operational profiles.

It is important to note that the survey excluded campgrounds located in provincial and national parks. Additionally, campgrounds in Quebec were not included, as a separate survey was conducted in that province during the same period.

## Key Findings:

- **Revenue Sources:** Campsite rentals and lodging fees accounted for 85% of total revenue on average.
- **Revenue Levels:** Participating campgrounds generated an average gross revenue of \$383,900 in 2022, with median revenue at \$226,500.
- **Expenses and Profit:** The largest expense category was wages, consuming 26% of revenue, followed by maintenance and operating expenses (20%). The average profit margin reported was 17%.
- **Employment:** During the 2022 peak season, campgrounds employed an average of 8.6 staff members, with seasonal workers accounting for the largest category.
- **Campground Ownership:** Corporate ownership dominated, representing 46% of surveyed campgrounds. This is followed by

sole proprietorships (18%) and partnerships (15%).

- **Seasonality:** The majority of campgrounds (85%) operate seasonally, with closures during the low season. British Columbia stands out with the lowest rate of seasonal closures (49%), reflecting its milder climate.
- **Types of Accommodations:** Campsites were nearly universal (99%) across campgrounds, while other accommodations such as cottages, cabins (50%), and ready-to-camp units (29%) were less common. The average campground offered 116 accommodation units, with campsites representing the vast majority.



# INTRODUCTION

- Study Background
- Methodology

# STUDY BACKGROUND

To address the need for a deeper understanding of the economic impact of the RV sector, the Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association of Canada (RVDA) and the Canadian Recreational Vehicle Association (CRVA) commissioned The Portage Group Inc. and Parcel Economics Inc. to estimate the economic activity generated by the RV industry in Canada.

This year's study extends beyond previous analyses by incorporating a detailed examination of the camping sector. As part of this effort, a survey of campgrounds was conducted to collect critical data inputs for the economic impact model. This report summarizes the findings of the campground survey.

## Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the 2023 Campground Survey was to gather data necessary to estimate the economic impact of campground accommodations. Specifically, the study aimed to:

- Develop a basic profile of campgrounds;
- Assess employment levels at campgrounds;
- Determine revenue levels of campgrounds;
- Determine the breakdown of revenue by source; and,
- Determine the breakdown of expenses and profit (loss) of campgrounds.

# METHODOLOGY

The campground survey was conducted in November and December 2023. It was distributed to all contacts listed in the campground inventory developed for the 2023 Economic Impact of the Canadian Recreation Vehicle Industry for which email addresses were available. A total of 301 campgrounds participated in the survey.

Note:

- The survey excluded campgrounds located in provincial and national parks.
- Campgrounds in Quebec were not included, as a separate survey was already being conducted in that province.

## Study Limitations

When interpreting results from this study, it is important to keep in mind the following limitations:

- The survey was not done using a random sample. Accordingly, results are representative of only the group of campgrounds that participated in the study. The statistics presented may or may not be representative of the broader campground industry.
- Results do not include campgrounds from Quebec.
- Results do not include campgrounds in provincial or national parks.
- Results should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size, particularly for the regional data.

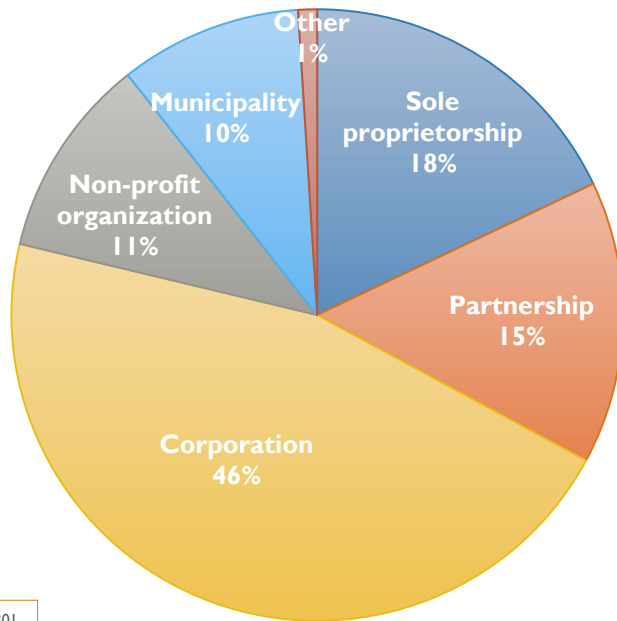


# PROFILE OF PARTICIPATING CAMPGROUNDS

- Campground Ownership Type
  - Distribution of Participating Campgrounds by Region
  - Operating Multiple Campgrounds
  - Portion With Non-Campground Activities by Region
  - Types of Accommodation Offered
  - Number of Accommodation Units (Per Campground) by Accommodation Type
  - Campground Seasonality
- 



# CAMPGROUND OWNERSHIP TYPE



N=301

At 46%, corporate ownership is the most prevalent form of campground ownership among survey participants. Sole proprietorships, representing 18%, come in a distant second, followed closely by partnerships at 15%.

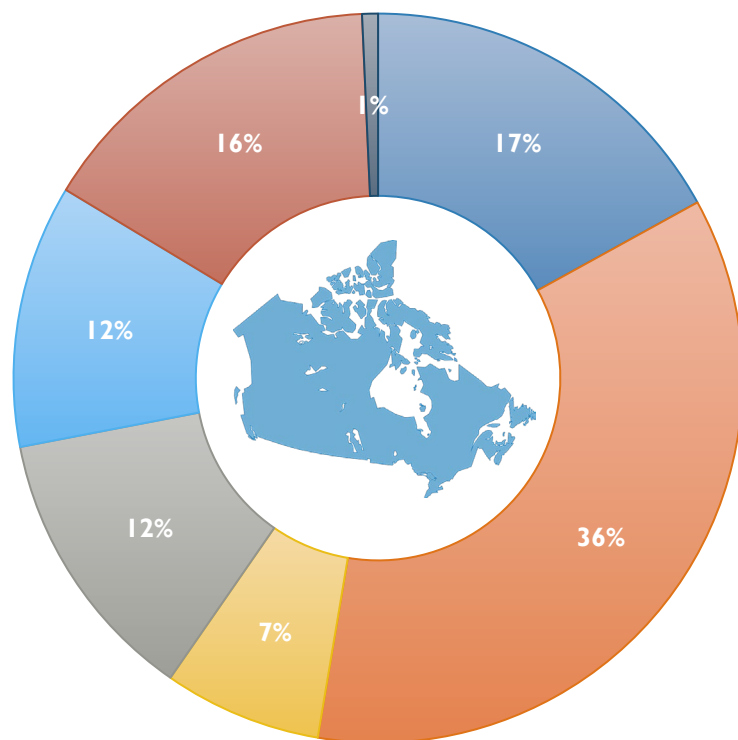
As outlined in the methodology, the survey does not include provincial or federal parks, focusing exclusively on privately operated campgrounds.

## Regional Highlights:

- Corporate ownership dominates in Ontario (59%), British Columbia (53%), and the Atlantic provinces (49%), accounting for half or more of campgrounds.
- In contrast, Alberta (26%) and the Prairies (26%) show significantly lower levels of corporate ownership. Campgrounds in these regions are much more likely to be owned by municipalities or non-profit organizations.

	Alberta N=35	BC N=47	Prairies N=58	Ontario N=107	Atlantic N=51
Sole proprietorship	9%	21%	9%	21%	22%
Partnership	14%	17%	7%	16%	22%
Corporation	26%	53%	26%	59%	49%
Non-profit organization	23%	0%	33%	4%	2%
Municipality	23%	9%	24%	0%	6%
Other	6%	0%	2%	0%	0%

# DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING CAMPGROUNDS BY REGION



Atlantic  
Manitoba  
Alberta  
Territories  
Ontario  
Saskatchewan  
British Columbia

N=301

Ontario accounts for the largest share of participating campgrounds, representing just over one-third (36%) of the total.

The Atlantic region (17%) and British Columbia (16%) are next, followed by Alberta and Saskatchewan with each accounting for 12%.

As noted in the methodology, Quebec did not participate in the survey and is therefore not represented in the data.

## Comparison with Statistics Canada Data:

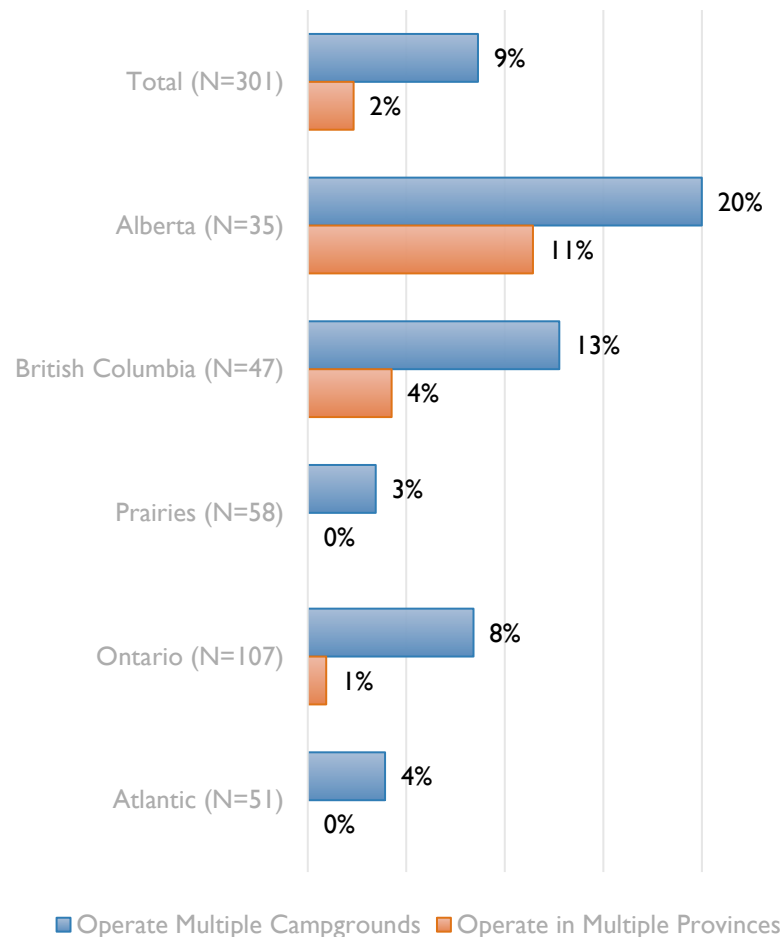
Using Statistics Canada's business counts by NAICS code, the regional distribution of participating campgrounds is largely consistent with the national breakdown.

However:

- The Prairies are overrepresented in the survey group.
- Alberta and British Columbia are underrepresented.

*Note: For further details on Statistics Canada business counts, refer to the 2023 Economic Impact of the Canadian Recreation Vehicle Industry report.*

# OPERATING MULTIPLE CAMPGROUNDS



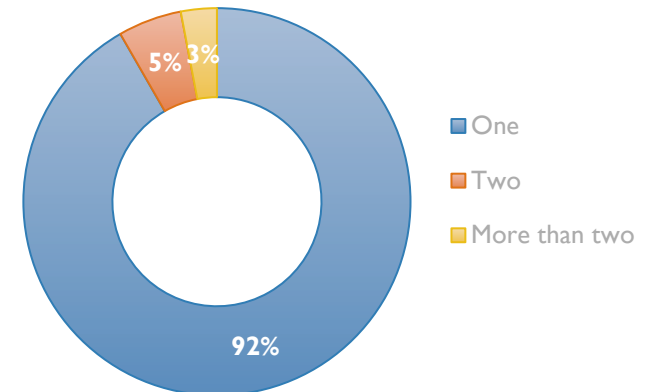
Almost one in ten (9%) survey participants report operating more than one campground, though only 2% operate in more than one province.

Only 3% report operating more than two campgrounds.

## Regional Highlights:

- Alberta stands out as the region with the highest share of operators managing multiple campgrounds:
  - 20% of Alberta respondents manage multiple campgrounds.
  - 11% operate in more than one province.
- While not as prominent, a significant share of respondents in BC (13%) and Ontario (8%) indicated that they operate multiple campgrounds.

Number of Campgrounds Operated

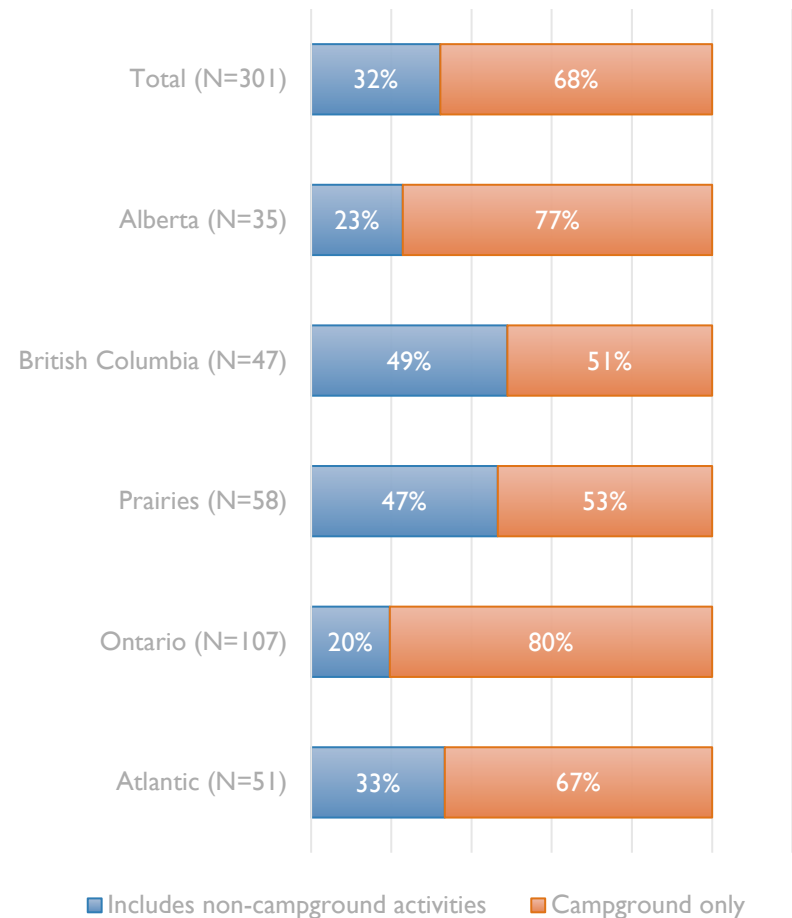


# PORTION WITH NON-CAMPGROUND ACTIVITIES BY REGION

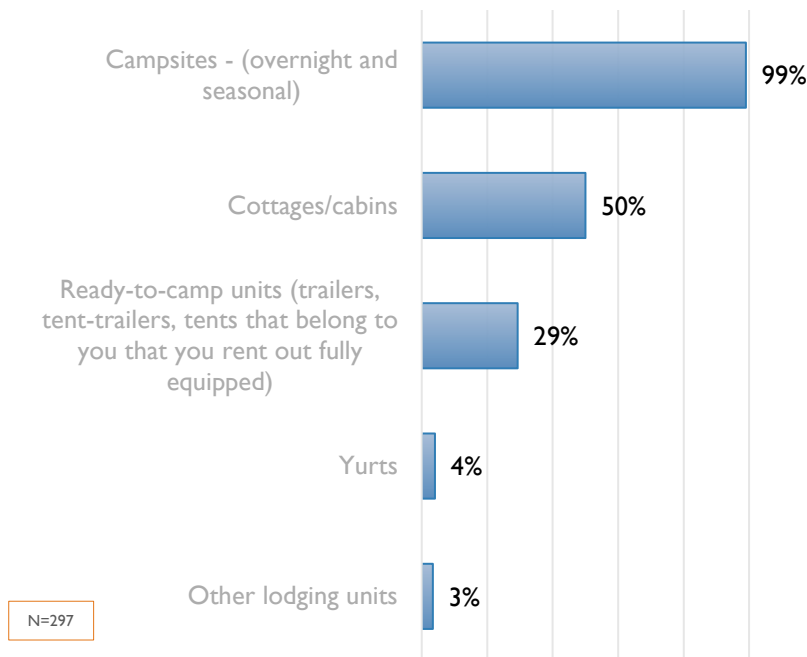
Nearly one-third (32%) of participants report that their business includes non-campground activities such as a hotel, motel, golf course or other activity,

## Regional Highlights:

- Almost half of respondents in BC (49%) and the Prairies (47%) report that their campground business include non-campground activities.
- At the other end of the spectrum, only one in five (20%) of Ontario participants and 23% of Alberta participants report other business activities.



# TYPES OF ACCOMMODATION OFFERED



Campsites are the dominant accommodation type, available at nearly all campgrounds (99% overall). While considerably less common, cottages and cabins are offered by half (50%) of campgrounds.

Ready-to-camp units, which include trailers, tent-trailers, and fully equipped tents, are available at 29% of campgrounds.

## Regional highlights:

- Campsites are universally available across all regions, with availability near 100% offering them in each region.
- Ready-to-camp units (9%) and cottages and cabins (22%) are least common in the Prairies region.

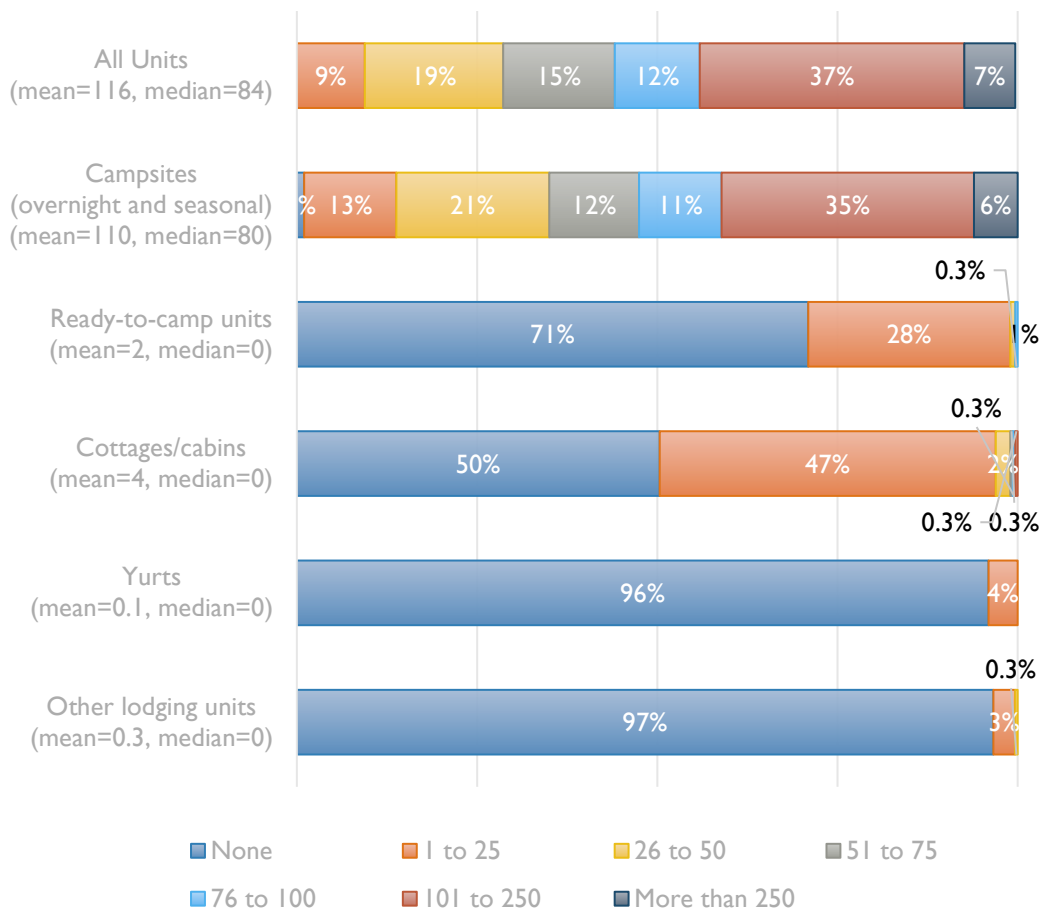
	Alberta N=33	BC N=46	Prairies N=58	Ontario N=106	Atlantic N=51
Campsites	100%	100%	100%	99%	96%
Cottages/cabins	30%	57%	22%	68%	51%
Ready-to-camp	24%	28%	9%	35%	43%
Yurts	0%	4%	3%	5%	6%
Other lodging units	0%	0%	2%	4%	10%

# NUMBER OF ACCOMMODATION UNITS (PER CAMPGROUND) BY ACCOMMODATION TYPE

The chart illustrates the number of units offered by campgrounds across different accommodation types.

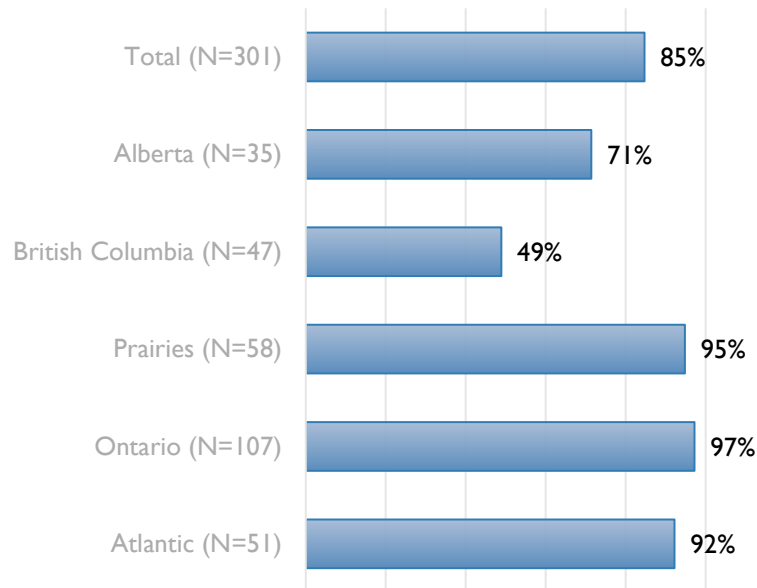
Participating campgrounds have, on average, 116 accommodation units, with a median of 84 units. However, there is a wide variation in the total number of units across campgrounds. Moreover, 44% have more than 100 units while 29% have less than 50.

Campsites (overnight and seasonal) account for the vast majority of units. Of the average 116 total units, 110, on average, are campsites. Moreover, the distribution aligns closely with the distribution for total units.



# CAMPGROUND SEASONALITY

## Close Down for Part of Year



Overall, 85% of campgrounds report that they close down for part of the year. However, there is considerable variation regionally.

- British Columbia has the lowest rate of seasonal closures, with around half (49%) of campgrounds closing for part of the year, reflecting its milder climate and extended operating opportunities.
- Conversely, over nine in ten campgrounds in Atlantic, Prairies and Ontario report closing during the low season.

The table shows the average number of months campgrounds operate during the high, low and shoulder seasons:

- High Season:** Campgrounds typically operate for around 3-4 months, with the longest high season observed in Alberta and the Prairies (4.2 months) and the shortest in the Atlantic provinces (3 months).
- Low Season:** Campgrounds are typically closed for approximately 6 months, with slightly shorter closures in Alberta (5.2 months) and British Columbia (5.6 months).

## Average Number of Months Per Season

	Total N=301	Alberta N=35	BC N=47	Prairies N=58	Ontario N=107	Atlantic N=51
High season	3.7	4.2	4.0	4.2	3.4	3.0
Shoulder season	2.5	2.6	2.5	1.7	2.8	2.7
Low season	5.8	5.2	5.6	6.1	5.8	6.2

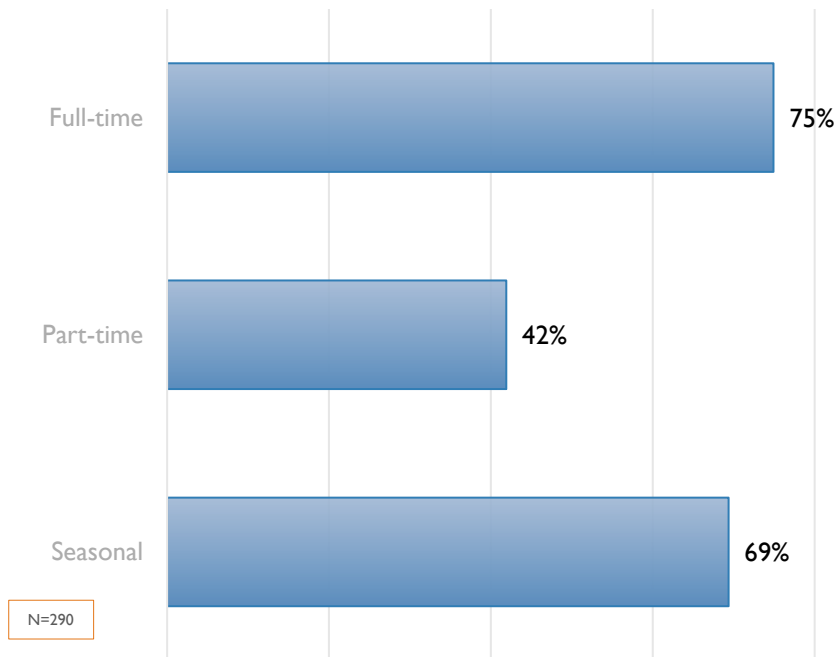


# EMPLOYMENT

- Types of Employees – Peak in 2022
- Number of Employees (Per Campground) by Employee Type – Peak in 2022



# TYPES OF EMPLOYEES – PEAK IN 2022



During peak season in 2022, the majority of campgrounds reported employing full-time or seasonal staff. Three-quarters (75%) of campgrounds employed full-time staff while seven in ten (69%) employed seasonal staff.

Part-time employment was less common, with only 42% indicating that they employed staff in this category.

## Regional Highlights:

- Full-time employment was most common in BC (86%) and Ontario (83%).
- Campgrounds in Ontario (74%) and the Atlantic (76%) reported the highest use of seasonal staff.

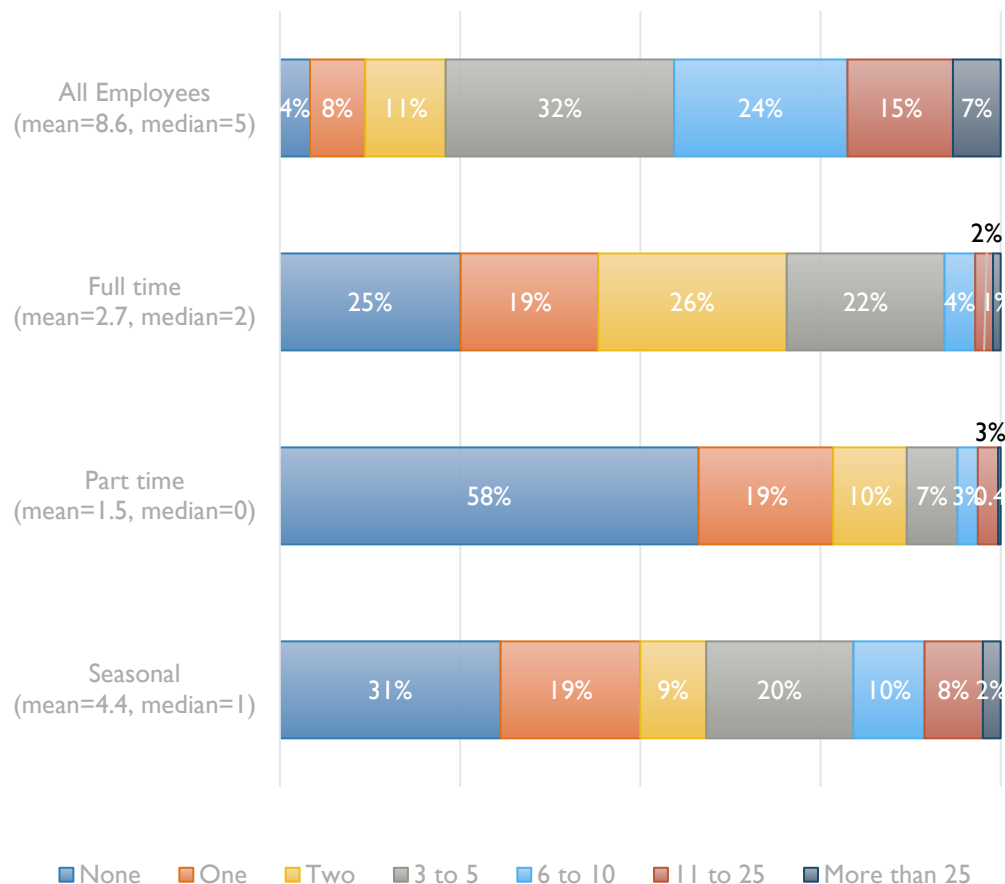
	Alberta N=34	BC N=45	Prairies N=55	Ontario N=103	Atlantic N=50
Full-time	61%	86%	67%	83%	68%
Part-time	47%	47%	41%	38%	42%
Seasonal	61%	63%	64%	74%	76%

# NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES (PER CAMPGROUND) BY EMPLOYEE TYPE – PEAK IN 2022

During the peak season of 2022, participating campgrounds employed an average of 8.6 staff members, with the median number being 5 employees. The majority of campgrounds (56%) reported having between 3 and 10 staff members at their busiest time.

A small percentage (4%) of campgrounds reported having no staff during the peak season. This likely reflects campgrounds operated solely by their owners, who did not categorize themselves as employees.

The largest category of staff during the peak season was seasonal workers, averaging 4.4 employees per campground, with a median of 1.

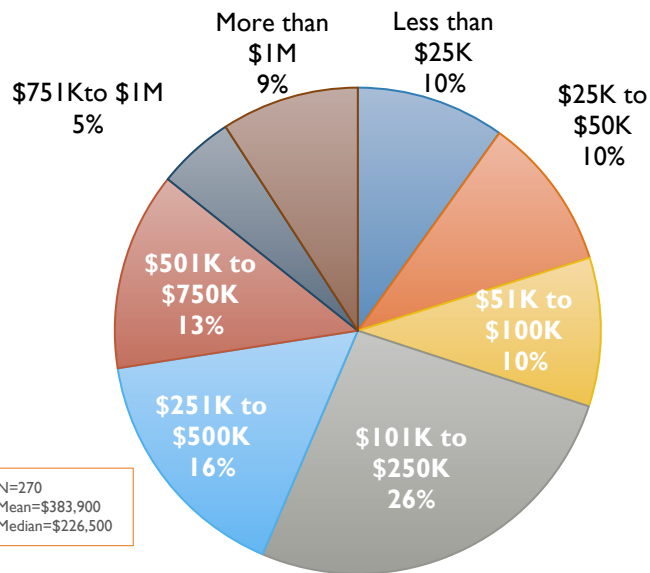




# REVENUE AND EXPENSES

- Revenue Per Campground (2022)
- Campground Revenue Sources (2022)
- Campground Expenses and Profit as a Percent of Revenue (2022)

# REVENUE PER CAMPGROUND (2022)



Participating campgrounds earned an average gross revenue of \$383,900 in 2022, with a median revenue of \$226,500. While there is a wide distribution of campgrounds by revenue category, a significant 26% earn between \$101,000 and \$250,000, and 29% fall within the \$251,000 to \$750,000 range.

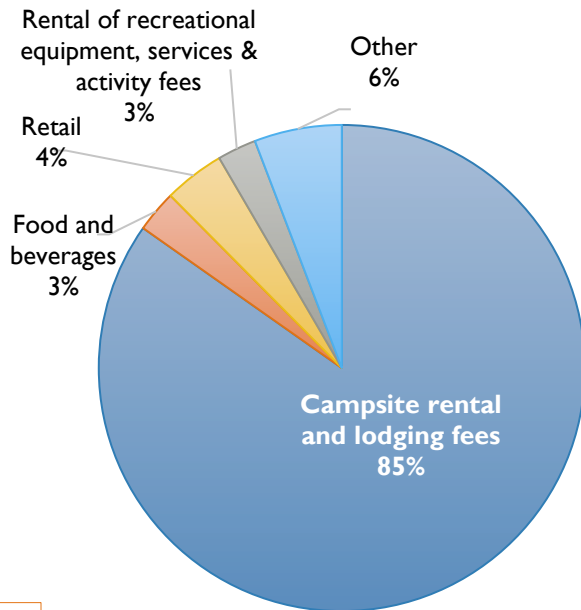
It is important to note that in cases where a campground operates alongside non-campground activities, the reported revenue reflects only the campground business.

## Regional Highlights:

- The average and median revenues are significantly higher at Ontario campgrounds than in other regions.
- In contrast, the lowest average and median revenues were in the Prairies.

	Alberta N=33	BC N=40	Prairies N=49	Ontario N=98	Atlantic N=47
Less than \$25K	15%	12%	18%	2%	13%
\$25K to \$50K	15%	7%	24%	3%	8%
\$51K to \$100K	12%	20%	6%	3%	17%
\$101K to \$250K	15%	15%	29%	30%	35%
\$251K to \$500K	27%	12%	10%	18%	13%
\$501K to \$750K	3%	10%	8%	23%	8%
\$751K to \$1M	3%	15%	2%	6%	0%
More than \$1M	9%	10%	2%	14%	6%
Mean	\$337,761	\$456,086	\$209,663	\$521,506	\$261,746
Median	\$200,000	\$250,000	\$102,000	\$426,250	\$150,000

# CAMPGROUND REVENUE SOURCES (2022)



N=223

Unsurprisingly, campsite rentals and lodging fees constitute the largest source of revenue, averaging 85% of total income for participating campgrounds. All other revenue categories contribute 6% or less to the overall total.

*Note: Only 233 campgrounds provided revenue data for 2022.*

## Regional Highlights:

- The proportion of revenue from campsite rentals and lodging fees varies by region. Alberta reports the highest share at 93%, while the Atlantic region records the lowest at 79%.

	Alberta N=27	BC N=34	Prairies N=42	Ontario N=82	Atlantic N=37
Campsite rental and lodging fees	93%	87%	82%	85%	79%
Food and beverages	1%	1%	3%	2%	7%
Retail	2%	6%	2%	5%	5%
Rental of recreational equipment, services & activity fees	2%	2%	4%	3%	1%
Other	2%	5%	8%	6%	7%

# CAMPGROUND EXPENSES AND PROFIT AS A PERCENT OF REVENUE (2022)

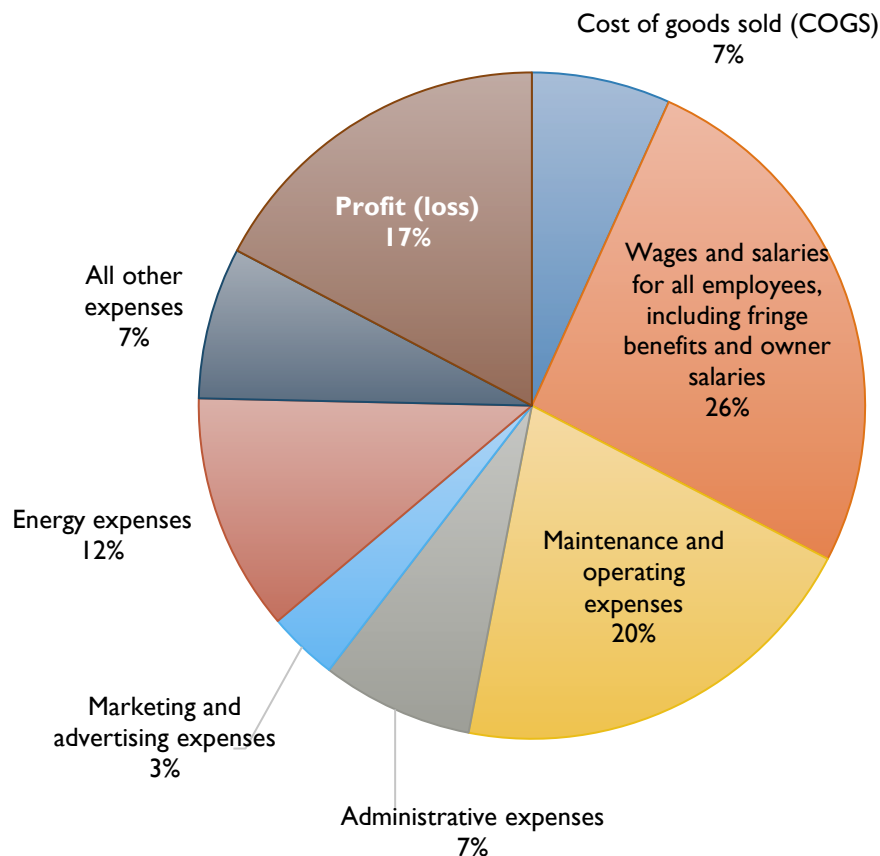
The pie chart highlights the average expenses and profit (or loss) as a percentage of revenue for 2022.

Data on profit was provided by 116 campgrounds, while expense data came from 143 campgrounds. Accordingly, results should be interpreted with caution.

The largest expense category is wages, accounting for 26% of revenue on average. This is followed by maintenance and operating expenses (20%) and energy costs (12%).

Participating campgrounds reported an average profit margin of 17% for 2022.

*Note: Regional breakdowns are unavailable due to small sample sizes.*



Note: Expenses were initially calculated as a percent of expenses. The sample size for expenses is N=143. The results in the pie chart have been adjusted based on the average profit margin. The sample size for profit (loss) is N=116.