

Lesson 5

Municipalities and Rural Communities



GUIDING QUESTIONS

1 How do local governments influence their communities?

2 What actions can be taken to improve my community?

3 Why should I care about my community?

OVERVIEW

Local governments provide New Brunswickers with essential local services and are responsible for the planning, growth and well-being of their community through legislation, by-laws and policies.

In this lesson, students begin with an assessment of their community. After learning about local governance in New Brunswick, students complete an online scavenger hunt to learn about their local government. Next, students will work in groups to develop a detailed action plan to improve an issue in their community. In the *Consolidation* activity, students will reflect on why they should care about their community and work with others to create positive change.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- assess their community's strengths and weaknesses;
- understand the structure and function of local governments in New Brunswick;
- identify key information about their own municipality or rural community;
- analyze different actions that could be taken to address an issue in their community;
- evaluate the importance of community engagement.

Starter

1. Ask students to assess their community by responding to the questions on Activity 5.1. Alternatively, the data could be collected through an online survey. A template has been provided on the project website.

TEACHER NOTE

Consider having students and their families fill out the survey in order to analyze findings from the wider community. A family version of the survey is available online.

2. Discuss the results of the survey.
 - What was your overall assessment of our community?
 - What do you think are our community's main strengths and weaknesses?
 - Do your views align with your classmates? What reasons can you provide for the similarities or differences?

Activities

1. Use Slide Deck 5 to review basic information about local governance in New Brunswick. Key questions:
 - What are the features and responsibilities of municipalities and rural communities?
 - How do local government councils function?
 - How do local government councils influence their communities?
2. Ask students to complete an online scavenger hunt about their municipality or rural community (Activity 5.2). Give students time to complete it independently or in pairs and then share their responses in small groups or as a class.
 - Year of incorporation (if applicable)
 - Population and census data (Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2016)
 - Geographic boundaries of the municipality or rural community and three major landforms or waterways within it
 - Composition of the local government council (titles and numbers of positions)
 - Description of five services provided to the community
 - Summary of three recent announcements or new programs offered and who is impacted in the community
 - Additional: Photo evidence of neighbourhood attractions, cultural institutions and activities (four pieces)
3. Divide students into groups and have them discuss their views about the most important needs and opportunities

in their community. Students should reflect on the findings in the *Starter* activity and from their research about their municipality or rural community.

- What do you think are the most pressing issues in our community?
 - Do you see any opportunities for improvement or innovation?
 - How could the health of our community be improved?
4. Ask each group to reach a consensus about one issue they want to address through a detailed community action plan. Using Activity 5.3 as a guide, each group should conduct research, design their plan and analyze the potential results. Students should use primary and secondary resources, such as the local government's website, research studies and media sources.
 5. Allow each group to present its plan to the rest of the class.

Alternative Activity

1. By-laws are the primary legislative instrument of local governments. The local government council makes decisions by adopting or amending recommendations from its committees and local government officials contained in reports and communications. Ask students to research a recent by-law passed by their local government council and complete Activity 5.4. Exemplar 5.5 can be used as a guide.

Key questions:

- Details: What are the details of the by-law?
 - Conditions: What are the underlying conditions?
 - Objectives: What are the goals and objectives?
 - Results: How can progress be assessed?
 - Analysis: Do you think the by-law will be effective? Why or why not?
2. In small groups or through a whole class discussion, have students share their by-law research and analysis.

Consolidation

Through a written reflection or class discussion, have students respond to one or more of the following questions:

- Why should we care about our community?
- What can young people do to make changes in their communities?
- Why is it important to collaborate with others on addressing community needs?
- Why is it important to have diversity in government and within groups tackling change in our communities?

SUPPORTS AND ADAPTATIONS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance. • Allow students to explore home communities as well as the community in which they now live.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may have different feelings towards their local government. Encourage empathy and foster a safe place for respectful discussion. • Depending on the community, students could choose to focus on a particular ethnic or religious group and see how they fit into the larger community. • Focus research on programs and services for youth or relevant other groups in the community. • If applicable, encourage students to explore nearby Indigenous communities, and their changes over time, or how these communities fit into the larger community.
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative activities and discussion. • The community action plan presentation can be created and shared in an entirely digital format, using PowerPoint or Google Slides.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Most communities in New Brunswick are classified as either a **city, town, village, regional municipality** or **rural community**.

A town, city, or village operates on its own and is categorized as a single municipality, whereas regional municipalities and rural communities include one or more communities. This allows various local responsibilities to be shared among a group of communities for efficiency.

Municipalities or **rural communities** represent the most local level of government in New Brunswick. They are responsible for meeting their communities' needs and fulfilling duties, such as managing the growth and well-being of the community.

There are 104 **local governments** in New Brunswick and they receive their powers and responsibilities from the provincial government.

New Brunswick also has 236 **local service districts** (LSDs). An LSD is a structure that allows for the administration and delivery of local services such as streetlights, recreation, garbage collection, and fire protection to areas of the province that are not incorporated (do not have a mayor and councillors). These services are coordinated by the provincial government through the Department of Environment and Local Government.

Each municipality and rural community has a specific geographic area and is responsible for delivering local services for the people living within its jurisdiction, such as water and sewage treatment, public transit, roads and bridges, local parks and recreational facilities.

Local governments also have the ability to tax people in order to pay for the services they provide to citizens.

Property taxes are established by each local government and may vary, based on the type of property owned. Each year, local governments determine how much money they need to collect from property taxes to contribute to the cost of services, and determine the tax rate based on that amount.

Local government councils are the democratically elected bodies that make decisions on behalf of the municipality or rural community, and are accountable for those decisions to their community. They are comprised of a head of council called a **mayor** and several **councillors**, collectively called **council members**.

Councils are responsible for the planning, growth and safety of the community. Council members govern by listening to the concerns of their constituents (people living in their community), attending meetings and creating, discussing and voting on bills and by-laws they believe will improve their community. Councillors also support and participate in various activities and events in their communities.

A council makes decisions collectively, meaning that it is not individual council members but rather the council as a whole, based on a majority vote, that decides and acts for the community.

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITIES

- Tracadie

RURAL COMMUNITIES

- Beaubassin-est/East
- Campobello Island
- Cocagne
- Hanwell
- Haut-Madawaska
- Kedgwick
- Saint-André
- Upper Miramichi

VILLAGES

- Alma
- Aroostook
- Atholville
- Balmoral
- Bas-Caraquet
- Bath
- Belledune
- Bertrand
- Blacks Harbour
- Blackville
- Cambridge-Narrows
- Canterbury
- Cap-Pelé
- Centreville
- Charlo
- Chipman
- Doaktown
- Dorchester
- Drummond
- Eel River Crossing
- Fredericton Junction
- Gagetown
- Grand Manan
- Grande-Anse
- Harvey
- Hillsborough
- Lac Baker
- Le Goulet
- Maisonnette
- McAdam
- Meductic
- Memramcook
- Millville
- Minto
- Neguac
- New Maryland
- Nigadoo
- Norton
- Paquetville
- Perth-Andover
- Petit-Rocher
- Petitcodiac
- Plaster Rock
- Pointe-Verte
- Port Elgin
- Rexton
- Riverside-Albert
- Rivière-Verte
- Rogersville
- Saint-Antoine
- Saint-Louis de Kent
- Saint-Léolin
- Sainte-Anne-de-Madawaska
- Sainte-Marie-Saint-Raphaël
- Salisbury
- St-Isidore
- St. Martins
- Stanley
- Sussex Corner
- Tide Head
- Tracy

TOWNS

- Beresford
- Bouctouche
- Caraquet
- Dalhousie
- Florenceville-Bristol
- Grand Bay-Westfield
- Grand Falls
- Hampton
- Hartland
- Lamèque
- Nackawic
- Oromocto
- Quispamsis
- Richibucto
- Riverview
- Rothesay
- Sackville
- Saint Andrews
- Saint-Léonard
- Saint-Quentin
- Shediac
- Shippagan
- St. George
- St. Stephen
- Sussex
- Woodstock

CITIES

- Bathurst
- Campbellton
- Dieppe
- Edmundston
- Fredericton
- Miramichi
- Moncton
- Saint John