

# Fact Sheet: Calgary Small Business

CALGARY CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREA (CMA)  
2020 EDITION

RESEARCH & STRATEGY  
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## Highlights

Calgary small businesses account for 95 per cent of all businesses – they are a driving force within the city's business community. Small businesses provide jobs for local residents and are important for the vitality of inner cities. Small business owners have the advantage over larger corporations in that their size gives them the flexibility to adapt quickly in terms of aligning resources. They are able to be innovative with products and implement processes and efficiencies. These advantages, married with their general passion for their business and ability to

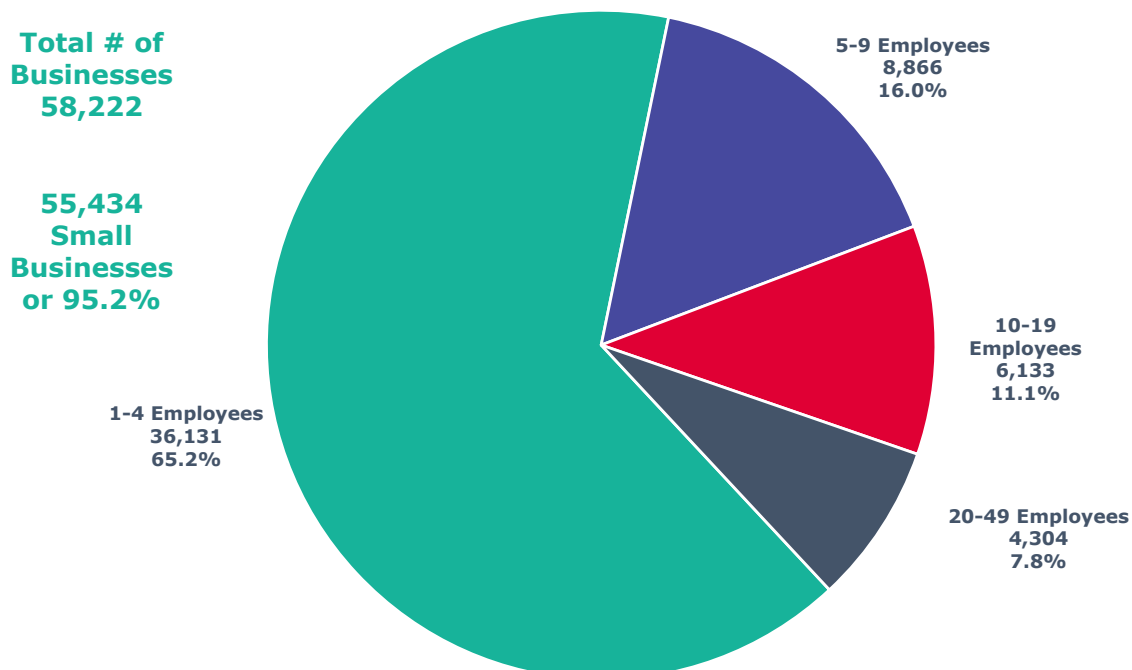
enjoy the advantage of customer focus, sets them apart from larger corporations.

## Business Counts

Of Calgary's total number of businesses in 2019 (58,222), small business (businesses with less than 50 employees) accounted for 95.2 per cent or 55,434 businesses.

A breakdown of Calgary's small businesses by employee size illustrates that the smallest segment (1 to 4 employees) is the largest at 36,131 businesses or 65.2 per cent.

## Calgary CMA Small Business by Number of Employees



Source: Statistics Canada, December 2019

## Small Business by Industry and Employee Size

The dominant industries that made up Calgary's small business sector in 2019 were:

- Professional, scientific, and technical services - 11,356 small businesses (20.5 per cent of total share)
- Construction - 6,373 small businesses (11.5 per cent of total share)
- Health care and social assistance - 4,958 small businesses (8.94 per cent of total share)



**Highly educated, globally connected workforce.**

Calgary has the highest proportion of STEM degree completions of major cities in Canada.

Calgary is a global city and one of the most ethnically diverse cities in Canada. 33.7 per cent of Calgary's population is visible minority and 29.4 per cent are immigrants.

*Census 2016, Statistics Canada*

### Footnote

<sup>1</sup>For the purposes of this publication, a small business is one that has between 1 and 49 employees.

## Small Business by Industry and Employee Size Calgary CMA

Industry	1-4 Employees	5-9 Employees	10-19 Employees	20-49 Employees	Total	% Distribution
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	214	45	12	13	284	0.5%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	513	129	122	112	876	1.6%
Utilities	41	15	9	22	87	0.2%
Construction	4,473	957	552	391	6,373	11.5%
Manufacturing	581	298	266	255	1,400	2.5%
Wholesale trade	971	505	462	313	2,251	4.1%
Retail trade	1,823	1,350	1,007	521	4,701	8.48%
Transportation and warehousing	1,828	212	157	139	2,336	4.2%
Information and cultural industries	292	139	75	56	562	1.0%
Finance and insurance	1,074	293	284	188	1,839	3.3%
Real estate and rental and leasing	1,892	241	139	110	2,382	4.3%
Professional, scientific and technical services	9,541	930	531	354	11,356	20.5%
Management of companies and enterprises	131	55	52	54	292	0.5%
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	1,562	501	290	218	2,571	4.6%
Educational services	375	123	98	82	678	1.2%
Health care and social assistance	3,175	819	588	376	4,958	8.94%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	260	89	81	82	512	0.9%
Accommodation and food services	738	880	796	732	3,146	5.7%
Other services (except public administration)	2,654	944	455	211	4,264	7.7%
Public administration	42	3	7	5	57	0.1%
Unclassified	3,951	338	150	70	4,509	8.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,131</b>	<b>8,866</b>	<b>6,133</b>	<b>4,304</b>	<b>55,434</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Note: Small Businesses by Industry omits those which are deemed unclassified by Statistics Canada. Unclassified businesses are included in the Small Business Total.*

*Source: Canadian Business Counts, Statistics Canada, December 2019*

## Small Business Growth

In 2019, 362 small businesses were created in Calgary, reflecting 0.7 per cent growth over the previous year. The total number of Calgary businesses (all employee sizes) grew by 327 year-over-year.

Industries representing the highest percentage in small business growth were:

- Public administration - 57 small businesses in 2019 versus 43 in 2018, an increase of 14 businesses or 32.6 per cent
- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting - 284 small businesses in 2019 versus 271 in 2018, an increase of 13 businesses or 4.8 per cent
- Health care and social assistance - 4,958 small businesses in 2019 versus 4,761 in 2018, an increase of 197 businesses or 4.14 per cent

Industries representing the lowest percentage in small business growth were:

- Management of companies and enterprises - 292 small businesses in 2019 versus 344 in 2018, a decrease of 52 businesses or -15.2 per cent
- Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction - 876 small businesses in 2019 versus 964 in 2018, a decrease of 88 businesses or -9.1 per cent
- Finance and insurance - 1,839 small businesses in 2019 versus 1,915 in 2018, a decrease of 76 businesses or -3.97 per cent

## Business Counts Year-Over-Year Change

Industry	Small Business				Total Business			
	2018 1-49 Employees	2019 1-49 Employees	# Change	% Change	2018 1-500+ Employees	2019 1-500+ Employees	# Change	% Change
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	271	284	13	4.80%	278	291	13	4.68%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	964	876	-88	-9.13%	1,127	1,034	-93	-8.25%
Utilities	87	87	0	0.00%	105	106	1	0.95%
Construction	6,468	6,373	-95	-1.47%	6,745	6,645	-100	-1.48%
Manufacturing	1,396	1,400	4	0.29%	1,615	1,617	2	0.12%
Wholesale trade	2,329	2,251	-78	-3.35%	2,470	2,408	-62	-2.51%
Retail trade	4,645	4,701	56	1.21%	5,054	5,111	57	1.13%
Transportation and warehousing	2,244	2,336	92	4.10%	2,357	2,462	105	4.45%
Information and cultural industries	573	562	-11	-1.92%	626	611	-15	-2.40%
Finance and insurance	1,915	1,839	-76	-3.97%	2,022	1,931	-91	-4.50%
Real estate and rental and leasing	2,292	2,382	90	3.93%	2,366	2,446	80	3.38%
Professional, scientific and technical services	11,417	11,356	-61	-0.53%	11,623	11,567	-56	-0.48%
Management of companies and enterprises	344	292	-52	-15.12%	471	403	-68	-14.44%
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	2,515	2,571	56	2.23%	2,693	2,745	52	1.93%
Educational services	680	678	-2	-0.29%	741	749	8	1.08%
Health care and social assistance	4,761	4,958	197	4.14%	4,944	5,144	200	4.05%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	520	512	-8	-1.54%	594	589	-5	-0.84%
Accommodation and food services	3,099	3,146	47	1.52%	3,371	3,416	45	1.33%
Other services (except public administration)	4,176	4,264	88	2.11%	4,263	4,349	86	2.02%
Public administration	43	57	14	32.56%	72	68	-4	-5.56%
Unclassified	4,333	4,509	176	4.06%	4,358	4,530	172	3.95%
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,072</b>	<b>55,434</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>0.66%</b>	<b>57,895</b>	<b>58,222</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>0.56%</b>

Note: Unclassified businesses are included in the Small Business Total.

Source: Calgary Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), Total With Employees, Canadian Business Counts, Statistics Canada, December 2018 & 2019

## Small Business Per Capita

Relative to its population, Calgary had the second highest number of small businesses per capita of major cities in Canada in 2019 at a rate of 37.6 per 1,000 population.

## Self-Employment

In 2019, there were 131,100 self-employed Calgarians, a decline in of -7.1 per cent from the 141,100 self-employed in 2018. On a per capita basis, Calgary had the second highest number of self-employment of major cities in Canada at 93.2 per 1,000 population.

During the past 10 years (2009-2019), Calgary experienced self-employment growth of 18.2 per cent.

In 2019, the largest group of Calgary entrepreneurs was the 45 to 54 age group with 33,600 self-employed or 25.6 per cent, followed by the 35 to 44 age group at 31,300 or 23.9 per cent of total self-employed.

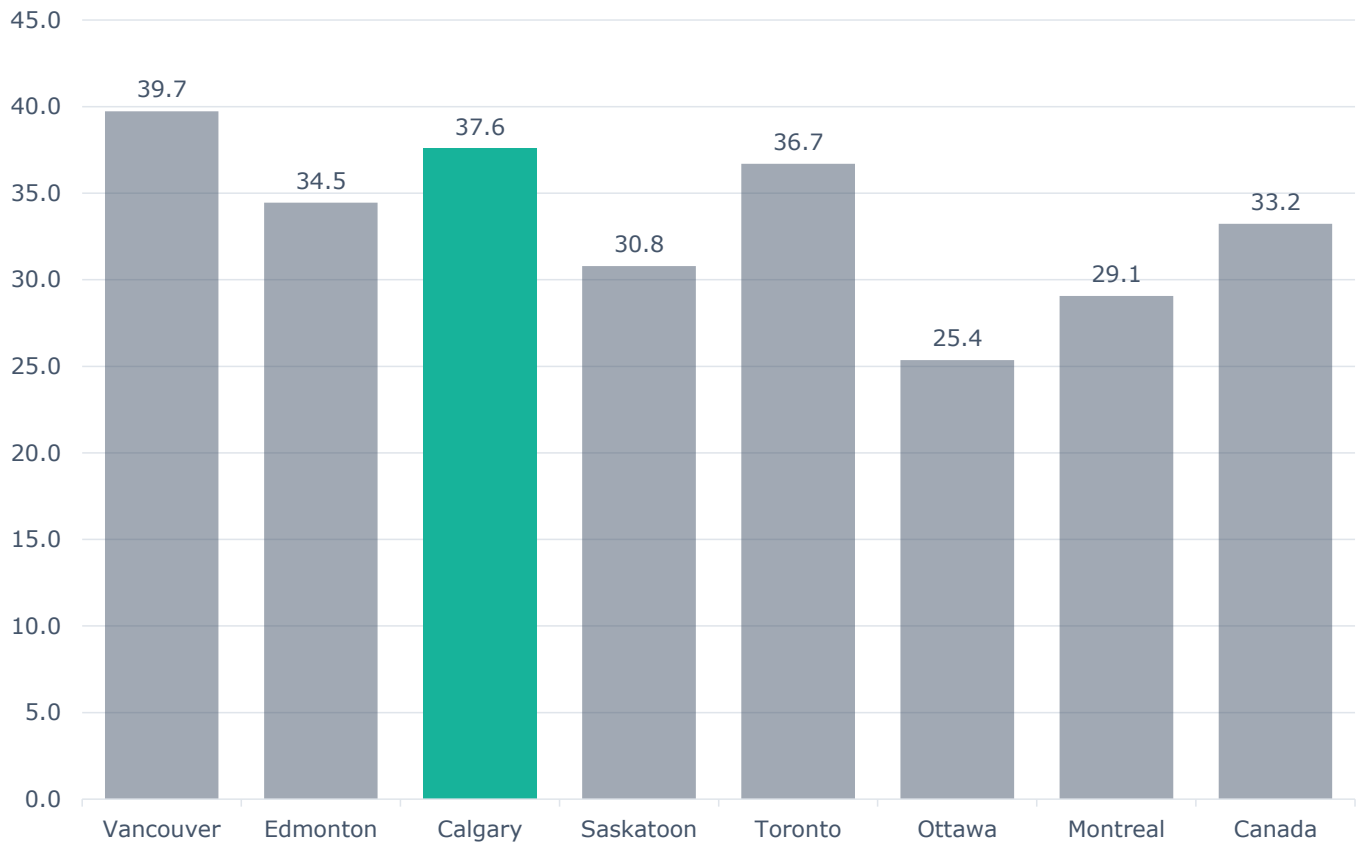


**Exceptional quality of life.**

Calgary has ranked among the Top 5 most liveable cities in the world every year since 2009 because of our economy, safety, infrastructure, social programs and a healthy lifestyle.

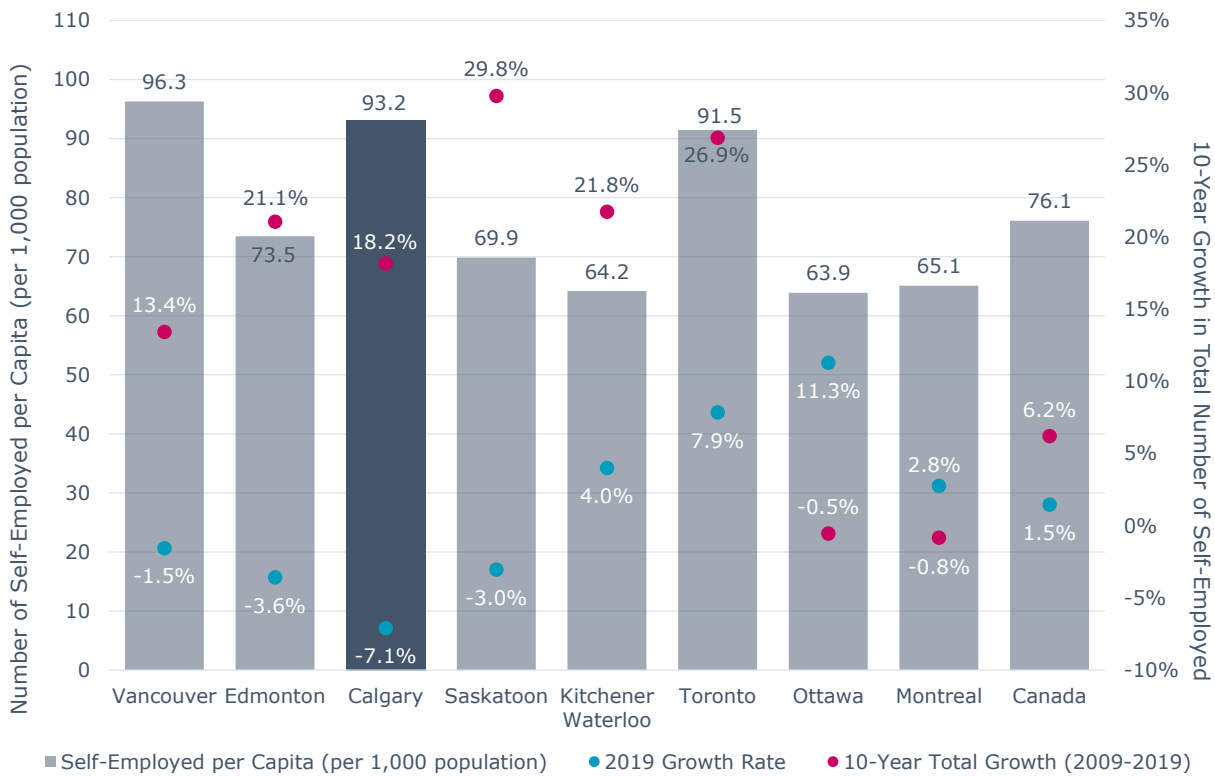
*The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2009-2019*

## Small Business per Capita Across Canada



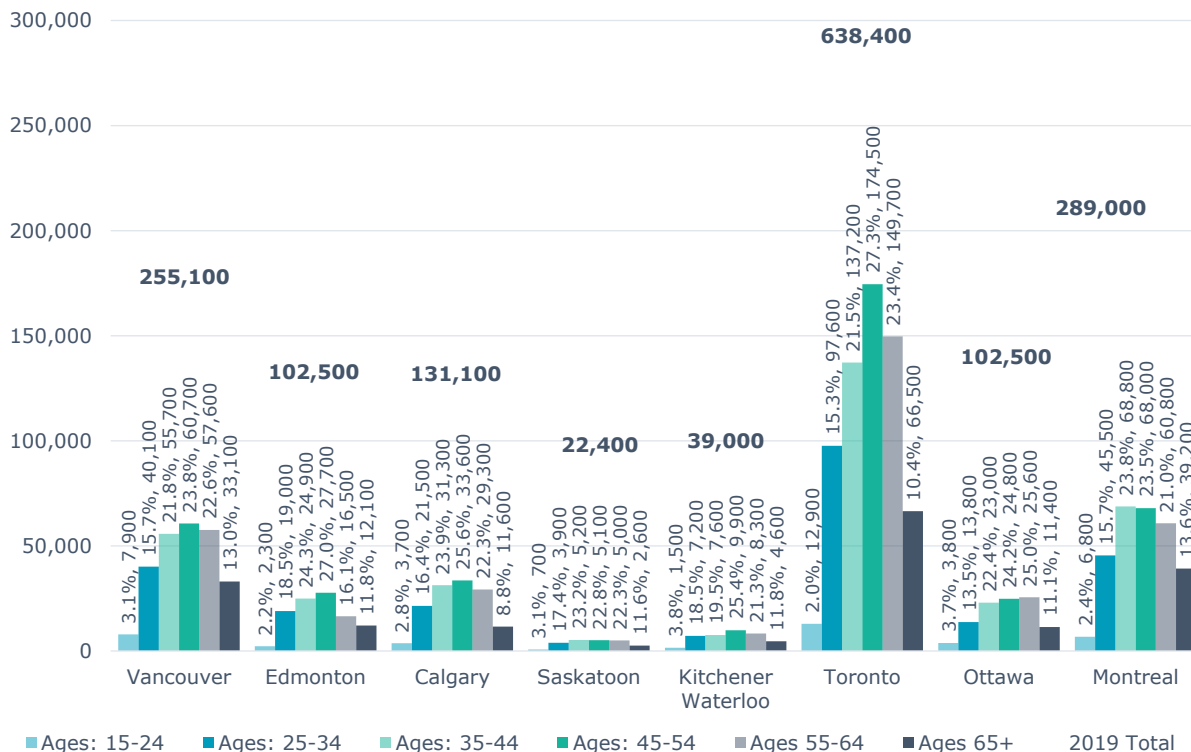
Source: Statistics Canada, CMA Population, July 1, 2019 and Canadian Business Counts, December 2019 1 to 49 Employees (Per 1,000 Population)

## Self-Employed per Capita and 10-Year Growth



Source: Statistics Canada, 2020, per 1,000 Population

## Number of Self-Employed by Age Group



Source: Statistics Canada, 2020

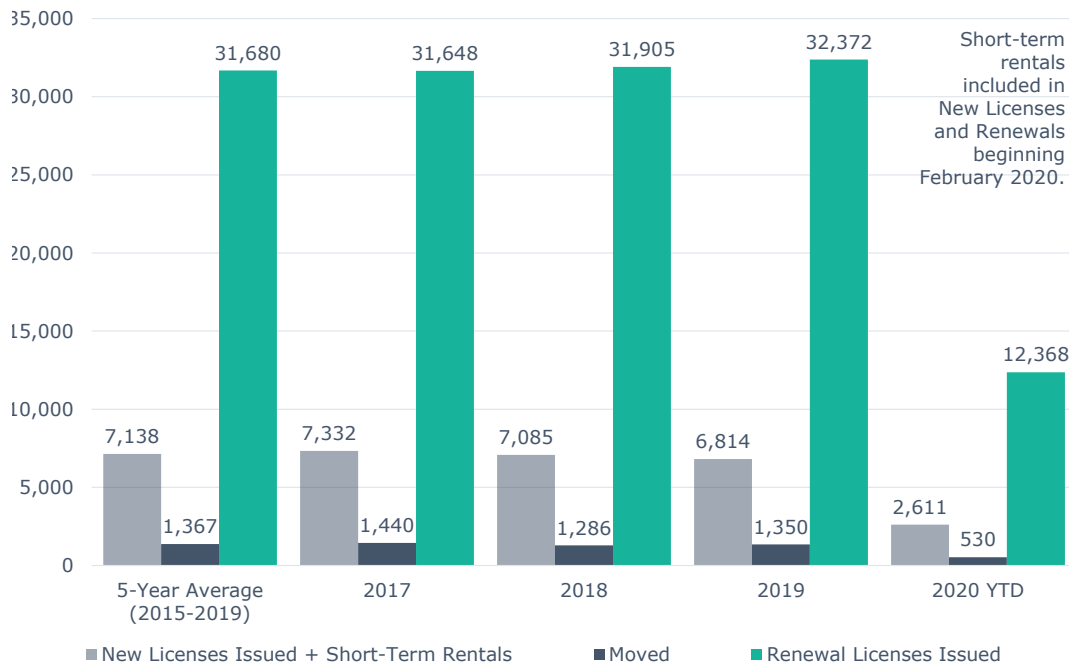
## Business Licenses

Any time a business makes changes, moves, changes owners or ownership structure, the City of Calgary ends one business licence and issues a new one. In 2019, there were 32,372 business license renewals and 6,814 new business licenses

issued. These results are in line with the 5-year average (2015-2019) of 31,680 business license renewals and 7,138 new business licenses issued.

*Note: Results do not include businesses licenses issued by higher levels of government or associations.*

### City of Calgary Business Licenses



Source: The City of Calgary Planning and Development, May 2020

## Business Bankruptcies

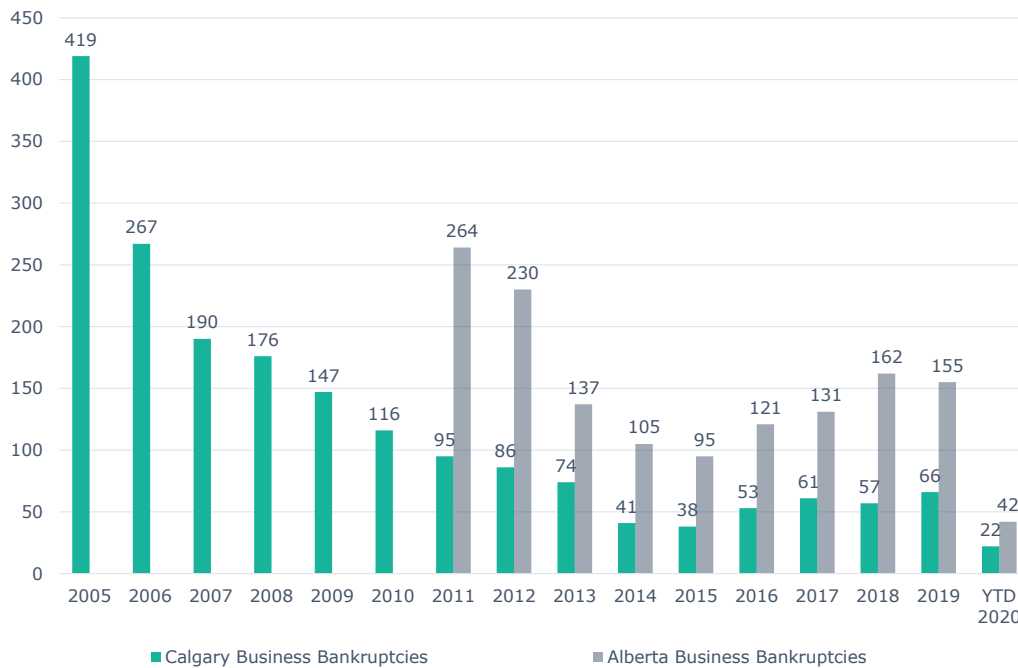
Historically, Calgary has experienced a steady decline in business bankruptcies, from a high of 419 in 2005 to a low of 38 in 2015. Since 2015, business bankruptcies have fluctuated with 66 recorded in 2019.

Of Alberta's 155 business bankruptcies in 2019,

42.3 per cent were Calgary businesses.

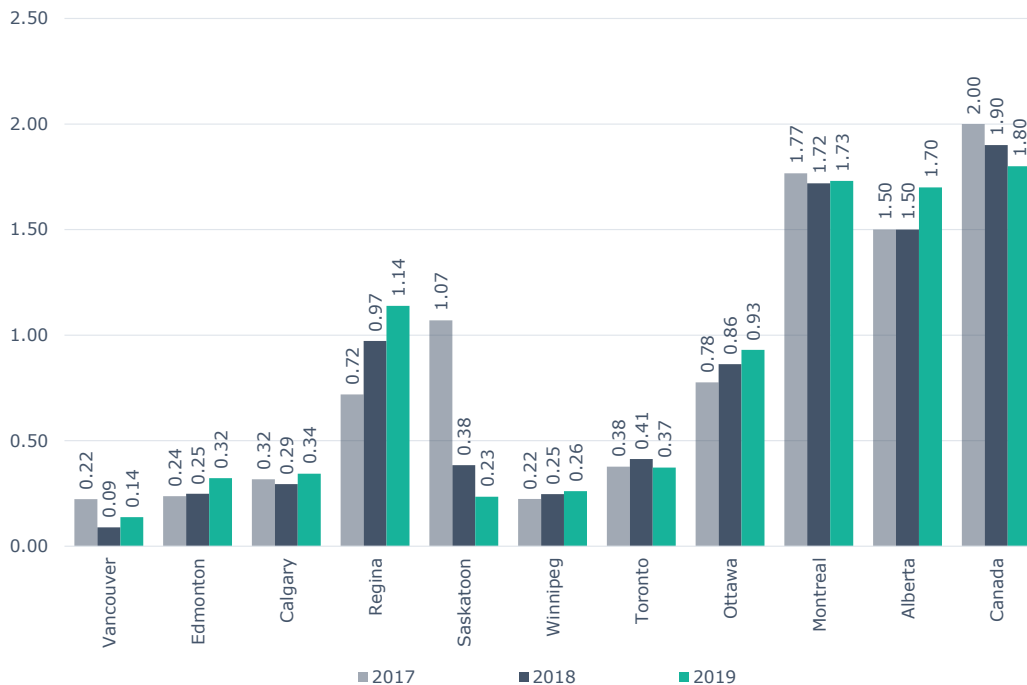
With 95.2 per cent of Calgary businesses in the small business segment, it is assumed that the majority of business bankruptcies involve small businesses. Calgary business bankruptcy rates are low compared to the Canadian average and other major Canadian cities.

### Calgary and Alberta Business Bankruptcies



Source: Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada, Q1 2020

### Business Bankruptcy Rates Across Canada



Source: Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada, June 2020, (Per 1,000 Businesses)