

NEW BRUNSWICK RENOVATIONS

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# Costs & Budgeting

Renovation costs, budgeting guidance, contractor pricing, quotes, payment schedules, and NB market rates for all project types

21 Expert Answers from Reno IQ

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## How much does a complete gut renovation cost in New Brunswick in 2026?

A complete gut renovation in New Brunswick typically costs \$150-\$250 per square foot in 2026, meaning a 1,500 sq ft home would run \$225,000-\$375,000 depending on finishes and structural complexity.

Gut renovations involve stripping the home down to the structural frame and rebuilding everything — electrical, plumbing, insulation, drywall, flooring, kitchen, bathrooms, windows, and often HVAC systems. The wide price range reflects the dramatic difference between basic builder-grade finishes versus premium materials, as well as the extent of structural work required in older NB homes.

### Budget Breakdown for a Typical 1,500 Sq Ft NB Home:

- **Basic gut renovation (\$150-\$180/sq ft):** New electrical panel and wiring, updated plumbing rough-in, spray foam insulation, drywall throughout, laminate flooring, basic kitchen with stock cabinets, standard bathroom fixtures, builder-grade windows, and basic lighting. Total: \$225,000-\$270,000.
- **Mid-range gut renovation (\$180-\$220/sq ft):** Everything above plus hardwood or luxury vinyl flooring, semi-custom kitchen cabinets, quartz countertops, tile backsplash, upgraded bathroom with tile shower, better windows, pot lights throughout, and quality interior doors. Total: \$270,000-\$330,000.
- **High-end gut renovation (\$220-\$250/sq ft):** Premium finishes including custom cabinetry, natural stone countertops, hardwood flooring throughout, luxury bathroom fixtures, high-efficiency windows, smart home integration, crown moulding, and designer lighting. Total: \$330,000-\$375,000.

**New Brunswick's Maritime climate significantly impacts gut renovation costs.** Older NB homes often require extensive moisture remediation, foundation repairs, and envelope upgrades that aren't immediately visible. Spring snowmelt frequently reveals foundation issues, while decades of freeze-thaw cycles may have compromised the building envelope. Budget an additional \$15,000-\$30,000 for unexpected structural repairs, foundation waterproofing, or envelope improvements in pre-1980 homes.

**Mechanical systems represent a major cost component** in NB gut renovations. Complete electrical rewiring with a new 200-amp panel costs \$8,000-\$15,000. Full plumbing replacement including new supply lines, drain lines, and fixtures runs \$12,000-\$25,000. HVAC system replacement or installation adds \$8,000-\$20,000, with heat pumps becoming increasingly popular for their efficiency in NB's climate.

**The permitting and professional requirements** add to the total cost but are essential for safety and resale value. Structural modifications require engineering assessments (\$1,500-\$3,000). All electrical and plumbing work must be performed by TSANB-licensed professionals and inspected. Building permits for gut renovations typically cost \$2,000-\$5,000 depending on your municipality.

**Timeline expectations** for gut renovations in NB run 4-8 months, with exterior work scheduled during the May-October construction season. Starting demolition in late fall allows interior work to proceed through winter, with exterior envelope work resuming in spring. This timing helps manage costs and ensures weather-sensitive work happens during optimal conditions.

**Essential contingency planning** is critical for gut renovations. Budget 20-25% contingency for older NB homes where hidden issues are common — knob-and-tube wiring, galvanized plumbing, asbestos insulation, or structural problems masked by previous renovations. A \$300,000 gut renovation should have a \$60,000-\$75,000 contingency fund.

**Financing considerations** matter significantly at this investment level. Many homeowners use home equity lines of credit, refinancing, or construction loans to fund gut renovations. The improved home value typically justifies the investment in NB's strong real estate market, but cash flow management during the 6+ month project timeline requires careful planning.

Need help finding an experienced renovation contractor for your gut renovation project? New Brunswick Renovations can connect you with local professionals who specialize in whole-home renovations and understand the unique challenges of NB's housing stock and climate.

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Q2

## What home renovation loans are available through NB credit unions in 2026?

**New Brunswick credit unions offer several home renovation financing options in 2026, typically including personal loans, lines of credit, and mortgage refinancing products, though specific terms and rates vary significantly between institutions.**

Credit unions across New Brunswick — including UNI Financial Cooperation, Cavendish Farms Credit Union, and smaller community-based credit unions — generally provide more personalized service and competitive rates compared to major banks for renovation financing. **Personal loans for renovations** typically range from \$5,000 to \$75,000 with terms of 1-7 years. Interest rates in 2026 are running approximately 8-14% depending on your credit score, loan amount, and relationship with the credit union. These work well for defined projects like a **\$25,000 kitchen renovation** or **\$15,000 bathroom update** where you know the exact scope and timeline.

**Home equity lines of credit (HELOC)** are often the most flexible option for larger or phased renovations. NB credit unions typically offer HELOCs up to 80% of your home's appraised value minus existing mortgage balance. Interest rates are usually prime plus 0.5-2%, making them more affordable than personal loans for homeowners with

significant equity. A HELOC works particularly well for **whole-home renovations** or **basement finishing projects** where costs may evolve as work progresses. You only pay interest on funds actually drawn, making it cost-effective for projects spanning multiple months.

**Mortgage refinancing** can be the most economical option for major renovations over \$50,000. If your current mortgage rate is significantly higher than today's rates, refinancing to access equity for renovations while securing a better rate makes financial sense. This approach works well for **comprehensive renovations** like adding a second storey or **full gut renovations** of older NB homes where costs reach \$100,000-\$200,000.

Some NB credit unions offer specialized **renovation mortgages** that combine purchase financing with renovation costs into a single mortgage product. This is particularly valuable in New Brunswick's market where many homes need updating — you can buy that 1960s bungalow in Rothesay or heritage home in Fredericton and finance the necessary improvements immediately rather than waiting to build equity.

**Interest rates and terms** vary significantly between credit unions and change frequently with Bank of Canada policy. As of 2026, expect personal loan rates of 8-14%, HELOC rates around prime plus 1-2% (currently 7-8% range), and mortgage rates in the 4-6% range depending on term and down payment. Credit unions often offer rate discounts for existing members or those who move multiple services to the institution.

**Application requirements** typically include proof of income, credit check, property appraisal for secured products, and detailed renovation plans with contractor quotes for larger amounts. Processing time runs 1-3 weeks for most products. Many credit unions pre-approve renovation financing, allowing you to shop for contractors with confidence in your budget.

The key advantage of credit union financing is the **personalized service and local decision-making**. Unlike major banks where applications go through centralized underwriting, NB credit unions often make decisions locally and can consider factors like long-term membership, local property knowledge, and your specific renovation plans. They understand that a **\$40,000 kitchen renovation** in a Moncton home or **basement finishing project** in Fredericton adds real value to NB properties.

**Before applying**, get detailed contractor quotes for your renovation scope, understand your home's current value, and calculate your debt-to-income ratio including the proposed loan payments. Shop rates between multiple credit unions — a 1-2% rate difference on a \$50,000 renovation loan saves thousands over the loan term.

For current rates and specific product details, contact credit unions directly as terms change frequently. Many offer online pre-qualification tools to estimate approval amounts and rates based on your financial situation.

Need help finding experienced renovation contractors to provide accurate quotes for your financing application? New Brunswick Renovations can connect you with local professionals who understand credit union documentation requirements.

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Q3

## How much does it cost to rewire an older home in Moncton during a renovation?

**Rewiring an older home in Moncton typically costs \$8,000-\$15,000 for a standard 1,200-1,500 sq ft home, or approximately \$5-\$10 per square foot.** The final cost depends on the home's size, accessibility of existing wiring, panel upgrade requirements, and how much drywall repair is needed afterward.

### Scope and Pricing Breakdown

A complete rewire involves replacing all electrical wiring from the panel to every outlet, switch, and fixture in the home. In Moncton's older housing stock — much of which dates to the 1940s-1970s — you're often dealing with outdated cloth-wrapped wiring, undersized circuits, and electrical panels that don't meet current code requirements. The electrical work itself runs \$6,000-\$12,000, while the associated drywall patching and repainting adds another \$2,000-\$3,000 to the total project cost.

Most older Moncton homes need a **panel upgrade** as part of the rewiring process, moving from 60-amp or 100-amp service to modern 200-amp service. This upgrade costs an additional \$1,500-\$3,000 and requires coordination with NB Power for the meter and service connection. Homes with knob-and-tube wiring or aluminum wiring from the 1960s-1970s require complete replacement — insurance companies often refuse coverage or charge higher premiums until these outdated systems are updated.

### New Brunswick Code and TSANB Requirements

All electrical work in NB must be performed by a licensed electrician and inspected by the Technical Safety Authority of New Brunswick (TSANB). This isn't optional — it's provincial law. A complete rewire requires multiple TSANB inspections: rough-in inspection after wiring is installed but before drywall goes up, and final inspection after all devices and fixtures are connected. TSANB inspection fees add \$200-\$400 to the project cost but ensure the work meets code and your insurance remains valid.

Modern NB electrical code requires GFCI protection in bathrooms, kitchens, laundry rooms, and exterior outlets, plus AFCI (arc-fault) protection on bedroom circuits. Older homes being rewired must meet current code standards, not the standards from when they were built. This means more circuits, more outlets per room, and dedicated circuits for major appliances — all of which increases material and labour costs but dramatically improves safety and functionality.

### **Renovation Timing and Access**

Rewiring during a renovation is ideal timing because walls are already open, eliminating much of the drywall damage and repair costs. If you're planning a kitchen renovation, bathroom updates, or whole-home refresh, coordinate the electrical work first. Running new wiring through finished walls in an occupied home costs 30-50% more due to the additional labour for fishing wires and extensive drywall repairs afterward.

### **Winter Interior Work Advantage**

Electrical rewiring is perfect winter renovation work in New Brunswick — it's entirely interior and unaffected by weather conditions. Many Moncton electricians have better availability during winter months when exterior construction slows down. Plan the rewiring for January through March, then tackle any exterior work (siding repairs from electrical meter upgrades) during the spring and summer construction season.

### **Professional Requirements and Safety**

Never attempt DIY electrical work beyond simple fixture swaps on existing circuits. Rewiring involves working inside the electrical panel, running new circuits, and connecting to the main service — all of which require specialized knowledge and TSANB licensing. Improper electrical work creates fire hazards, electrocution risks, and insurance claim denials. Always verify your electrician holds current TSANB licensing and WorkSafeNB coverage before starting work.

Budget an additional **15-20% contingency** for older home rewiring projects. Opening up walls often reveals other issues — outdated plumbing that should be updated simultaneously, insulation problems, or structural repairs needed before closing walls back up. Getting the electrical, plumbing, and insulation work done together while walls are open saves money compared to tackling these systems separately later.

Need help finding a licensed electrician in the Moncton area? New Brunswick Renovations can connect you with experienced local electrical contractors for free estimates on your rewiring project.

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## What is the average cost per square foot for home renovations in New Brunswick?

**Whole-home renovation costs in New Brunswick range from \$50 to \$250 per square foot**, depending on scope, age of the home, and quality of finishes — a range wide enough that the answer requires knowing what kind of work you're actually doing.

At the lower end of that range, a cosmetic whole-home refresh — new paint throughout, updated flooring, refreshed lighting and fixtures — on a 1,500 sq ft home runs roughly \$50–\$75/sq ft, or \$40,000–\$75,000 total. This type of work changes how a home looks and feels without touching the bones. Step up to a mid-range comprehensive renovation — kitchen, bathrooms, flooring, windows, and some insulation and electrical upgrades — and you're looking at \$80–\$150/sq ft, or \$100,000–\$200,000 for that same 1,500 sq ft home. At the top end, a full gut-to-studs renovation of an older NB home — the kind that involves new wiring, new plumbing, structural corrections, envelope upgrades, and premium finishes throughout — will run \$150–\$250/sq ft.

**On a trade-by-trade basis**, the per-square-foot cost varies dramatically by what's being done. Flooring installation (laminate or LVP) runs \$5–\$12/sq ft installed. Basement finishing starts around \$30–\$50/sq ft for basic work and climbs to \$60–\$100/sq ft with a full bathroom, bedroom, and quality finishes. Additions (new floor area added to the home) cost \$250–\$400/sq ft for single-storey construction. Kitchen renovations don't price cleanly by square foot — they run \$15,000–\$100,000+ depending on the level of work, since the cost is driven by cabinetry, appliances, countertops, and trade work rather than floor area.

### Why NB Homes Often Cost More Per Square Foot to Renovate Than They Appear

New Brunswick's older housing stock is one of the key cost variables that province-wide averages rarely capture. A cosmetic renovation on a 1980s Fredericton bungalow often turns into a mid-range renovation once the walls are open — knob-and-tube wiring that must be replaced, undersized plumbing that can't support a modern bathroom, asbestos-containing materials in floor tiles or insulation, and framing that isn't quite to modern standards. In a home built after 2000, you're mostly spending on materials and labour. In a pre-1980 NB home, budget 20–25% contingency because the surprises are practically guaranteed.

NB's climate also affects per-square-foot costs. Proper insulation upgrades (closed-cell spray foam on foundation walls, dense-pack cellulose in attic and walls) are not optional in a Maritime climate with 100+ freeze-thaw cycles annually and humidity swings of 30–50% between seasons. Cutting those line items out of a renovation budget to reduce the cost-per-foot is a false economy — you'll spend the money later on heating bills, moisture damage, and mould remediation.

As a practical planning tool, the \$50–\$250/sq ft range tells you the outer limits. What matters is building a detailed scope with your contractor, getting 3+ quotes in writing, and adding a proper contingency. Always get current quotes for your specific project — material costs fluctuate and NB renovation pricing varies 20–40% between contractors for identical scope. Need help connecting with experienced local renovation professionals? New Brunswick Renovations can match you with contractors in your area for free.

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Q5

## How much should I budget for unexpected costs during a renovation in NB?

**Budget a contingency of 15–20% of your total renovation cost for standard projects, and 20–25% for gut renovations of older NB homes** — these aren't arbitrary cushions, they reflect the reality of what NB renovators routinely find once walls open and floors come up.

The contingency percentage scales with risk. A cosmetic renovation on a recently built home — new paint, flooring, and fixture updates — has relatively low hidden-issue risk, so 10–15% is reasonable. A mid-range kitchen or bathroom renovation that opens walls, touches plumbing or electrical, and involves some demolition warrants 15–20%. A full gut renovation of a pre-1980 NB home where you're taking the house down to studs should have 20–25% set aside, because you are virtually certain to find something that adds cost. In dollar terms, if your primary budget is \$60,000, carry \$9,000–\$15,000 in contingency before you start.

What actually burns through contingency funds in NB homes? **Knob-and-tube wiring** is one of the most common discoveries — it's present in a surprising number of homes built before 1950, and once it's discovered, your electrician and insurer may require full replacement before the project can proceed. **Asbestos-containing materials** in vinyl floor tiles, pipe insulation, ceiling texture, and some drywall compounds are common in homes built before 1990. Professional abatement — the legally required approach — typically runs \$3,000–\$15,000 depending on quantity and material type. **Subfloor rot** beneath old bathrooms or around kitchen sinks is extremely common in NB given the province's humidity history and older plumbing systems. Replacing a section of rotted

subfloor and framing adds \$1,500–\$5,000 depending on extent. **Mould remediation** in basements and behind exterior walls — particularly in homes near the Bay of Fundy or Saint John River valley where moisture infiltration is prevalent — can run \$2,000–\$10,000 before any renovation work begins.

**Structural discoveries** are another contingency consumer. A wall that was assumed to be non-load-bearing turns out to carry a beam. A header over a window opening was undersized by original construction standards. Joist ends are rotted at the foundation sill. Each of these requires an engineer's assessment (typically \$500–\$1,500 per site visit) plus the cost of the structural correction.

The practical way to manage contingency is to keep it in a separate account from your renovation payments. Don't treat it as money to spend — treat it as insurance. If your renovation closes out cleanly and only 5% of the contingency gets used, that's a good outcome. Don't spend the remainder until you have a Certificate of Substantial Completion or the equivalent sign-off from your contractor and any inspectors.

One more NB-specific factor: supply chain delays and material price fluctuations have been significant in recent years, and NB is at the end of most supply chains. A quoted price for windows, cabinetry, or specialty materials may be based on current pricing that changes between signing and procurement. Locking in material pricing in your contract where possible, or building a buffer for price escalation on long-lead items, is smart risk management for NB projects.

Any contractor who tells you that your project is straightforward and no contingency is needed has either never renovated an NB home before or is telling you what you want to hear. The province's housing stock and Maritime climate make surprises the rule, not the exception. Get connected with experienced local renovation professionals through New Brunswick Renovations — they know what to look for before work starts, which keeps surprises manageable.

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Q6

## Are renovation costs in New Brunswick lower than the national Canadian average?

**Yes — renovation costs in New Brunswick run approximately 10–20% below major Canadian city pricing for comparable work**, primarily because of lower labour rates and lower overhead costs for NB-based contractors. However, this advantage is narrowing as NB's construction sector grows and the province's housing market heats up.

The labour cost difference is the main driver. In Toronto or Vancouver, a journeyman carpenter or experienced renovation contractor charges \$75–\$100+ per hour in many cases. In Moncton, Saint John, or Fredericton, comparable tradespeople typically charge \$60–\$85 per hour. Multiply that difference across a multi-week kitchen or bathroom renovation and it adds up to meaningful savings. General contractor overhead and profit margins also tend to be lower in NB's more competitive local market, where reputation and word-of-mouth matter more than marketing budgets.

**Material costs, however, are not 10–20% lower** — and this is a critical nuance NB homeowners should understand before building a budget based on national comparisons. Most building materials arrive in New Brunswick by truck from Ontario, Quebec, or the US. Lumber, drywall, insulation, windows, cabinetry, appliances, and flooring all carry freight premiums compared to markets closer to major distribution centres. In some product categories, NB homeowners pay *more* than Greater Toronto Area residents for the same materials because of those freight costs. So the cost advantage is real but it lives almost entirely in the labour column.

The comparison also depends heavily on what part of NB you're in. Moncton, as the province's economic and population hub, has the most active renovation market and the most contractor competition — which generally keeps pricing competitive. Fredericton and Saint John have healthy contractor markets as well. In rural areas — Campbellton, Woodstock, Sussex, Miramichi — you may find lower hourly rates, but availability of specialized tradespeople (tile setters, custom cabinet makers, structural engineers) can be limited, and mobilization costs for trades who must travel to the job site can offset the rate advantage.

**How does NB compare to specific cities?** A mid-range kitchen renovation that costs \$60,000–\$80,000 in Toronto might cost \$45,000–\$65,000 for comparable quality in Moncton. A full bathroom renovation priced at \$35,000–\$50,000 in Vancouver typically runs \$28,000–\$40,000 in NB. Basement finishing that runs \$45,000–\$65,000 in Calgary comes in around \$35,000–\$55,000 in NB for similar finishes. These aren't guarantees — every project is different — but the 10–20% differential holds reasonably well for most residential renovation categories.

One area where NB costs can equal or exceed other provinces is in heritage and older home renovation. NB has a significant stock of pre-1970 homes — particularly in Fredericton, Saint John, and many smaller communities —

and renovating these homes involves complexity (knob-and-tube wiring, asbestos-containing materials, undersized plumbing, irregular framing) that adds cost regardless of local labour rates.

The practical takeaway: NB is a genuinely good province to renovate in from a cost standpoint, but don't plan a budget based on Toronto pricing with a 15% discount applied. Get 3+ quotes from local NB contractors for your actual project scope, and build your budget on those real numbers. Renovation pricing in NB varies 20–40% between contractors for identical scope, so shopping the job is worth the time.

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## How much does it cost to hire a general contractor in New Brunswick in 2026?

**General contractors in New Brunswick typically charge 15–25% of total project cost as their management fee**, though some GCs structure their pricing as a cost-plus arrangement or a fixed project price rather than a separate percentage markup. Understanding how your GC charges — and what's included — is essential before signing any contract.

The most common arrangement for larger NB renovation projects is **cost-plus with a management fee**. In this model, the GC passes through actual costs for labour (their own crew and subcontractors) and materials, then adds their management markup on top. For residential renovations in NB, this markup typically runs 15–25% depending on project complexity, the GC's experience and reputation, and the local market. On a \$100,000 renovation, that's \$15,000–\$25,000 in GC fees over and above the direct costs. On a \$50,000 project, expect \$7,500–\$12,500 in GC fees.

Many NB GCs also work on a **fixed-price (lump-sum) contract**, where they quote you an all-in number that includes their profit and overhead built into the project price. This is often preferred by homeowners because the total cost is known upfront — but the GC's margin is less transparent. Fixed-price contracts can work well when the scope is clearly defined from the start. They're riskier for the GC on projects with unknown conditions (older homes, basement work, anything involving demolition that might reveal surprises), which is why many GCs include allowances or contingency provisions in fixed-price quotes for these project types.

**What does the GC fee actually pay for?** A lot more than just showing up to manage people. A general contractor is responsible for scheduling all trades and material deliveries in the right sequence, sourcing and vetting subcontractors, pulling building permits and managing inspections, ensuring WorkSafeNB compliance for all workers on site, managing changes in scope and negotiating with subs when surprises arise, and being legally and financially responsible for the project outcome. On a complex NB renovation involving multiple trades over several months, a good GC's organizational work prevents expensive delays and mistakes that far exceed their fee.

**Hourly rates for renovation contractors** who work without the full GC model — skilled renovators who do much of the work themselves with selective subcontracting — run \$65–\$90/hour in Moncton, Saint John, and Fredericton in 2026. Journeyman carpenters charge \$55–\$75/hour. Specialty tradespeople (electricians, plumbers, tile setters) run \$75–\$120/hour for their respective work. These rates are for the tradesperson's time; material markups of 10–20% on top are standard.

NB is a market where reputation and relationships matter enormously in the renovation sector. A well-established GC with a strong local track record, solid subcontractor relationships, and a history of delivering projects on time commands premium pricing — and is generally worth it. A newer or less-established contractor offering lower GC

fees may lack the subcontractor relationships to keep your project moving efficiently. **Always get 3+ quotes**, ask each contractor how they structure their fees, and compare the total project cost, not just the GC percentage.

Request every contractor's WorkSafeNB clearance letter and proof of liability insurance before signing anything. A GC without both is not a contractor you want managing your home renovation, regardless of their price. For complex, multi-trade projects — additions, whole-home renovations, gut renovations of older NB homes — hiring an experienced GC is money well spent. Get connected with local renovation professionals through New Brunswick Renovations to find experienced contractors in your area.

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Q8

## What is the average hourly rate for renovation contractors in Moncton NB?

**Renovation contractors in Moncton charge \$65–\$90 per hour for skilled carpentry and general renovation work in 2026**, with specialty tradespeople running higher depending on their licence and the complexity of the work. These rates reflect a Moncton market that has tightened significantly as the city's population growth drives sustained renovation demand.

Breaking it down by trade, here's what you can expect to pay for licensed, insured, WorkSafeNB-covered tradespeople in the Moncton area: **General renovators and carpenters** charge \$65–\$85/hour. **Licensed electricians** run \$85–\$110/hour for residential work, with TSANB permit and inspection fees on top. **Plumbers** charge \$85–\$115/hour, again with TSANB-related fees. **Tile setters** typically charge \$60–\$80/hour or quote by the square foot — expect \$12–\$25/sq ft installed depending on tile size, pattern complexity, and substrate preparation required. **Painters** run \$45–\$65/hour or quote by the room/square foot.

Most renovation projects in Moncton aren't quoted by the hour for the full job — that's more common for service calls, small repairs, or time-and-materials arrangements on jobs where scope is uncertain. For defined projects (a bathroom renovation, kitchen upgrade, basement finishing), contractors typically provide a fixed-price quote or a cost-plus arrangement. The hourly rate matters most when you're hiring for day labour, repairs, or adding small

scope items during an ongoing project where the contractor charges for time actually worked.

**Minimum charges** are standard practice across the Moncton renovation market. Most contractors won't mobilize for less than a half-day rate (4 hours minimum), and many have a full-day minimum for jobs requiring tools, materials, and set-up. If you need a contractor for a two-hour repair, expect to pay for at least four. This is not price gouging — it reflects real mobilization costs, fuel, and lost productivity from breaking up their schedule.

Moncton's renovation market also involves **material markups** on top of hourly labour. Most contractors mark up materials they purchase on your behalf by 10–20%, which is standard practice and covers their time for procurement, transport, and warranty management on defective materials. Some contractors work on a labour-only basis where you purchase materials directly — this can reduce total cost but shifts the procurement burden to you.

One thing worth understanding about the Moncton market specifically: **skilled trades availability has tightened considerably since 2022**. Strong residential construction and renovation demand, combined with retirements in the trades, means that experienced, reputable renovation contractors in Moncton book out 4–8 weeks in advance for mid-size projects and 3–6 months for major renovations or additions. If a contractor is available immediately for a large project, that's worth understanding before signing — experienced contractors in Moncton are busy. Plan your project timeline accordingly, and don't let contractor availability pressure you into signing with someone you haven't properly vetted.

Request a WorkSafeNB clearance letter and certificate of liability insurance from any contractor before work begins. Both are non-negotiable regardless of hourly rate or project size. For anything beyond minor repairs, a detailed written quote specifying scope, materials, estimated hours, and payment schedule protects both parties and reduces the chance of disputes. Need help finding experienced renovation contractors in the Moncton area? New Brunswick Renovations can connect you with local professionals for free.

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Q9

## How much does a whole-home renovation cost in New Brunswick?

**A whole-home renovation in New Brunswick costs \$40,000–\$300,000+ depending on the scope, the size of the home, and the depth of work involved** — a cosmetic refresh is a very different project from a comprehensive gut-to-studs renovation, and the price difference reflects that reality.

At the entry level, a **cosmetic whole-home refresh** — paint throughout, new flooring in all rooms, updated light fixtures, new interior doors and hardware, and refreshed bathroom and kitchen fixtures without moving plumbing — runs \$50–\$75 per square foot. For a typical 1,200–1,500 sq ft NB bungalow, that translates to \$60,000–\$112,000. This work transforms how a home looks and feels without touching its mechanical, electrical, or structural systems.

Step up to a **comprehensive mid-range renovation** — a full kitchen renovation with new cabinets, countertops, and appliances; full bathroom gut and rebuild; new flooring throughout; window replacements; upgraded insulation and vapour barrier; and electrical panel upgrade — and you're looking at \$80–\$150/sq ft. On a 1,500 sq ft home, that's \$120,000–\$225,000. This level of renovation addresses both cosmetic and functional deficiencies and typically delivers a meaningfully more comfortable, energy-efficient home at the end.

A **full gut renovation** — stripping an older NB home down to the studs, correcting structural issues, completely replacing electrical and plumbing systems, installing modern insulation and vapour barrier throughout, then rebuilding with premium finishes — runs \$150–\$250/sq ft. On a 1,500 sq ft home, that means \$225,000–\$375,000. This scope is most common with pre-1960 homes where the mechanical, structural, and envelope systems have reached end-of-life simultaneously.

## What Drives Cost in an NB Whole-Home Renovation

The biggest cost variables are the **age of the home** and **what's discovered once walls open**. NB has a significant inventory of pre-1980 homes, particularly in Fredericton, Saint John, and smaller communities throughout the province. Renovating these homes almost always involves addressing knob-and-tube or aluminum wiring, galvanized or cast-iron plumbing, undersized electrical panels (60-amp services that need upgrading to 200-amp), and in pre-1990 homes, potentially asbestos-containing materials in floor tiles, pipe insulation, or ceiling texture. Professional asbestos abatement alone can run \$3,000–\$15,000 before any renovation work begins.

NB's climate adds another layer. A whole-home renovation in Maritime New Brunswick that doesn't address the building envelope — air sealing, proper insulation, updated vapour barrier, and HRV installation — is a missed opportunity. Homes that were built with 3.5 inches of fibreglass batt in the walls and R-20 in the attic are chronically cold in winter and humid in summer. Adding closed-cell spray foam on the rim joists, dense-pack cellulose in the walls, and upgrading the attic to R-60 will add \$20,000–\$40,000 to a whole-home renovation but typically reduces annual heating costs by 25–40% — a payback that matters given NB energy costs.

**Timeline** for a whole-home renovation on a typical NB home runs 4–8 months depending on scope. A cosmetic refresh might complete in 6–10 weeks. A comprehensive renovation of a 1,500 sq ft bungalow involving kitchen,

bathrooms, windows, insulation, and flooring takes 4–6 months. A full gut renovation takes 6–12 months, particularly if heritage features are being preserved or structural corrections are involved.

Budget a **20–25% contingency** for whole-home renovations of older NB homes — hidden conditions are almost guaranteed. Get detailed written quotes from 3+ contractors covering the full scope, and ensure every contractor carries liability insurance and WorkSafeNB coverage. For detailed guidance on specific trades within a whole-home renovation, visit [newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com/directory](http://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com/directory) to browse local renovation professionals.

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## Is it cheaper to renovate or build new in New Brunswick?

**In most scenarios in New Brunswick, renovating an existing home is cheaper than building new** — but the gap narrows considerably when you're dealing with an older home requiring extensive structural, mechanical, and envelope upgrades. The honest answer is: it depends on the condition of the existing home and the depth of renovation required.

New home construction in NB currently runs **\$200–\$350 per square foot** for a fully built, move-in ready home, depending on lot, finishes, and location. A modest 1,500 sq ft new home with standard finishes and an attached garage on a serviced lot in the Moncton or Fredericton area will total \$350,000–\$550,000 including the land. A custom home with premium finishes, complex architecture, and a desirable lot can easily reach \$600,000–\$900,000+. That's the cost baseline against which renovation must be compared.

A mid-range comprehensive renovation of an existing NB home — kitchen, bathrooms, flooring, windows, insulation, electrical panel upgrade, and cosmetic updates throughout — runs \$80,000–\$180,000 on a 1,200–1,500 sq ft home. Add the existing home's market value (let's say \$250,000 for a modest older bungalow in Moncton), and you're in at \$330,000–\$430,000 for a substantially updated home. That compares favourably against \$400,000–\$500,000 for comparable new construction — and you keep the mature lot, established neighbourhood, and whatever architectural character the original home had.

Where the calculation shifts toward building new is with **heavily deteriorated older homes**. If an NB home has structural settlement requiring foundation repair (\$20,000–\$60,000), knob-and-tube wiring requiring complete replacement (\$15,000–\$30,000 in a typical home), galvanized plumbing that needs full replacement (\$10,000–\$20,000), and asbestos abatement in multiple materials (\$5,000–\$15,000) — all before the renovation finishes begin — you might spend \$180,000–\$250,000 in mechanical and structural work on a home that, fully renovated, is only worth \$350,000. In that scenario, the numbers may argue for demolition and new construction, particularly if the lot has value.

**The emotional and practical factors** also matter in this decision. Renovating an existing home means living through disruption — often 4–8 months of construction activity in or adjacent to the living space, unless you vacate entirely. New construction means a clean slate with modern building systems, full envelope performance, and no hidden conditions — but also an 18–24 month process from lot acquisition through design, permits, construction, and occupancy. Many NB homeowners choose renovation because of neighbourhood, lot quality, proximity to schools and services, or genuine attachment to the existing home's character.

NB's climate is worth factoring into the new construction side of the equation. A new home built today must meet current NB Building Code energy efficiency requirements — better insulation, modern windows, and mechanical

ventilation — that existing homes, even renovated ones, often fall short of. New construction delivers a tighter, more energy-efficient envelope from day one. However, a comprehensive renovation that addresses the building envelope properly can get very close to new construction performance at lower total cost.

One practical approach: before making this decision, have your existing home assessed by a renovation contractor and an engineer. Spend \$500–\$1,500 on a thorough condition assessment before committing to a renovation scope. That investment clarifies what you're actually working with and gives you a realistic renovation budget to compare against new construction costs. Get connected with experienced local renovation professionals through New Brunswick Renovations to get that real-world assessment on your home.

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Q11

## What renovation financing options are available in New Brunswick?

**New Brunswick homeowners have several renovation financing pathways available**, from home equity products to government programs specifically designed for housing improvements. The right option depends on your equity position, credit profile, and the size of the renovation you're planning.

For homeowners with equity in their homes, a **Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC)** is typically the most cost-effective renovation financing tool. A HELOC lets you borrow against your home's equity at interest rates tied to prime — generally 1–3% above the Bank of Canada policy rate, significantly lower than personal loans or credit cards. HELOCs are revolving credit, meaning you draw what you need as the project progresses rather than taking a lump sum upfront. For a \$80,000 renovation, drawing funds in stages aligned with contractor payment milestones makes financial sense. Most major Canadian banks and credit unions offer HELOCs to NB homeowners with sufficient equity and adequate income.

A **home equity loan** (sometimes called a second mortgage) is a fixed-rate, fixed-term alternative that gives you a lump sum upfront. Rates are slightly higher than HELOCs but offer payment certainty for homeowners who prefer predictable monthly costs. This works well for well-defined, fixed-budget projects where you know the total cost

accurately before starting.

**Mortgage refinancing** is worth considering for large renovations — \$100,000 or more — where rolling the renovation cost into your mortgage at renewal allows you to finance improvements at your existing mortgage rate, which is typically the lowest rate you'll access. This makes most financial sense if your mortgage is approaching renewal anyway. Adding renovation costs to your mortgage extends your amortization, so run the long-term cost calculation carefully with your lender before choosing this route.

**Personal lines of credit and renovation loans** are available through banks and credit unions at rates that vary by applicant, typically in the 8–15% range. These are practical for smaller renovations (\$15,000–\$40,000) where the homeowner doesn't want to touch their mortgage or doesn't have accessible home equity. Smaller NB credit unions often offer flexible renovation loan products worth comparing against the major banks.

**Government programs** available to NB homeowners include the federal **Canada Greener Homes Loan**, which offers interest-free financing up to \$40,000 for eligible energy efficiency improvements — insulation upgrades, window replacement, heat pump installation, HRV systems. Given NB's heating costs and older housing stock, many NB homeowners qualify for meaningful loan amounts through this program. The federal government's **First Home Savings Account (FHSA)** benefits first-time buyers planning to purchase and renovate. NB Energy also periodically offers rebate programs for heat pump adoption and efficiency upgrades — check their current offerings at nbpower.com since these programs change year to year.

A critical financing discipline that protects NB homeowners: **never finance contractor payments through contractor-arranged financing**. Some contractors offer to arrange financing through third-party lenders as part of the sales process. These arrangements often carry high interest rates and can bind you to the contractor legally in ways that make dispute resolution very difficult. Arrange your own financing independently through a bank or credit union where you have an existing relationship.

On payment structure: regardless of financing method, never advance more than 10–15% as a deposit, and structure all subsequent payments to milestones, not calendar dates. A contractor requesting 40–50% upfront is a red flag in any NB renovation project. A well-structured payment schedule tied to completed, inspected milestones protects your investment throughout the project. Consult your financial institution for specific advice on which product suits your situation — the options above are general guidance, not financial planning advice.

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Q12

## How much does demolition cost during a home renovation in NB?

**Demolition during a home renovation in New Brunswick typically costs \$1,500–\$8,000 for interior selective demo on a standard residential project**, with full gut demolition of an entire home running \$10,000–\$25,000+ depending on home size, materials involved, and disposal costs. The range is wide because demolition complexity varies dramatically based on what's being torn out and what hazardous materials might be present.

For a **kitchen gut demolition** — removing cabinets, countertops, flooring, drywall, and disconnecting existing plumbing and electrical rough-ins — expect \$1,500–\$3,500 for the labour and disposal. A **bathroom demolition** runs similarly, \$1,000–\$3,000 depending on tile extent (tile is heavy, fills bins fast), fixture count, and whether the shower pan requires saw-cutting. **Basement finishing demolition** (removing old drop ceilings, carpet, panelling, and deteriorated framing) typically runs \$2,000–\$5,000 for a standard NB basement.

The biggest variable in NB demolition costs is **hazardous material abatement**. Homes built before 1990 in this province frequently contain asbestos in vinyl floor tiles, pipe insulation, joint compound, ceiling texture (popcorn ceilings), and exterior shingles. Homes built before 1978 may have lead paint on trim and exterior surfaces. These materials cannot be treated as normal construction waste — licensed abatement contractors must be hired, the materials must be contained and handled under specific protocols, and disposal must go to approved facilities. Professional asbestos abatement for a typical NB home with floor tile and pipe insulation removal runs \$3,000–\$15,000 depending on quantity and material type. This isn't optional and it's not something to DIY.

**Disposal costs** are a significant and often underestimated part of demolition budgets in NB. A 14-foot bin (the typical size for a room-level renovation) runs \$400–\$600 to rent and haul in Moncton, Saint John, or Fredericton. A 20-foot bin for a larger demo is \$550–\$800. Full gut renovations typically require 3–5 bin pulls over the course of demolition, adding \$1,500–\$4,000 in disposal costs before a nail has been swung on the new construction side. Some contractors include bin rental and disposal in their demo quotes; others quote labour only and bill disposal separately. Clarify this before accepting any quote.

For renovators considering DIY demolition to reduce costs: this can work well for **cosmetic demolition** — pulling up carpet and underlay, removing kitchen cabinet doors and drawers before contractors arrive, stripping old wallpaper. These tasks are straightforward and the savings are real. What requires more caution is demolishing walls, floors, and ceilings in older NB homes without confirming what's in them first. A 1970s ceiling that looks like plaster may contain asbestos-laden texture coating. A floor that looks like standard 1980s vinyl may be asbestos

vinyl tile. A wall may turn out to be load-bearing. Swinging a sledgehammer without knowing what you're hitting is how demo projects go from controlled to expensive in a hurry.

**A pre-demo assessment** by an experienced renovation contractor — or an environmental consultant for older homes — before any work begins is money well spent. Many NB renovation contractors will do a walkthrough to flag potential hazards before they start their scope. If asbestos is suspected, an environmental testing company can sample materials for \$300–\$800 and provide written confirmation before work begins, which removes the ambiguity and protects everyone on site.

For larger demolition scopes — foundation removal, structural demo, or whole-home interior gut — WorkSafeNB regulations require specific site safety measures and documentation. Any professional contractor handling demolition of this scale should be fully familiar with these requirements. Request their WorkSafeNB clearance letter and confirm their liability insurance covers demolition scope before work begins.

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## What are the hidden costs of home renovations in New Brunswick?

**The hidden costs of NB home renovations routinely add 20–40% to what homeowners originally budgeted,** and in older Maritime homes, the surprises are not random — they're predictable. Knowing what's lurking behind your walls before you start is the single most effective cost-control strategy available to NB homeowners.

**Hazardous material abatement** is the big one in this province. Any NB home built before 1990 should be assumed to contain asbestos somewhere until proven otherwise — vinyl floor tiles (especially 9-inch and 12-inch tiles from the 1960s–1980s), pipe insulation wrapped around heating pipes, joint compound on drywall seams, ceiling texture coatings, and even some exterior siding products. Professional abatement is legally required; you cannot simply bag this material and throw it in a bin. Testing runs \$300–\$800, and abatement (if required) runs \$3,000–\$15,000 depending on quantity and material type. Lead paint in homes built before 1978 adds another abatement consideration for sanded surfaces. Budget for testing before demolition begins — the cost of not knowing is far higher than the cost of knowing.

**Electrical system upgrades** are the most common discovery behind NB renovation walls. Many homes built before the 1970s still have 60-amp or 100-amp electrical services that cannot support modern renovation loads — an induction range, EV charger, heat pump, and modern bathroom with heated floors may require a 200-amp service upgrade at \$3,000–\$6,000 just to support the renovation safely. Knob-and-tube wiring, still found in pre-1950 NB homes, often must be replaced when walls are opened — both for code compliance and because some insurers won't cover homes with active knob-and-tube. A full rewire in an older home adds \$10,000–\$25,000.

**Structural surprises** are common in NB's older housing stock. A wall assumed to be non-load-bearing turns out to carry a beam. Floor joists are undersized by today's span tables, requiring sistering before new tile or stone can go down. Sill plates at the foundation are rotted from decades of moisture contact. Addressing these issues correctly requires an engineer's involvement (\$500–\$2,000 for assessment plus the cost of correction), and they can't be ignored if you want the renovation to be safe and code-compliant.

**Subfloor and framing rot** is NB-specific in its prevalence. Given the province's humidity history and the age of much of the housing stock, rotted subfloor around toilets, tubs, and kitchen sinks is nearly universal in older homes that haven't been recently renovated. Replacing a section of subfloor and rotted framing adds \$1,500–\$5,000 depending on extent, and it's discovered after demolition begins — not before.

**Waterproofing requirements** in NB basements are a hidden cost that many homeowners initially exclude from their finishing budget. An NB basement that shows no obvious moisture issues during a dry summer walk-through may reveal active water infiltration the following spring when snowmelt drives the water table up. Finishing a basement that later floods destroys \$30,000+ in work. Interior drainage systems with sump pumps run

\$5,000–\$15,000 and are often necessary before any basement finishing begins.

**Permit fees and inspection costs** are frequently omitted from contractor quotes or homeowner budgets. Municipal building permits run \$50–\$500 depending on scope and municipality. Electrical, plumbing, and gas permits through TSANB add \$100–\$400 each. An engineer's letter stamping a structural modification can add \$500–\$1,500 per review. These aren't optional — they're the cost of doing the work legally and safely.

**Temporary living costs** for major renovations are hidden costs that hit the monthly budget rather than the contractor invoice. A kitchen-out-of-service renovation means 6–10 weeks of takeout, restaurant meals, or a temporary kitchenette setup — \$1,500–\$4,000 in food costs that wasn't in the renovation budget. A whole-home renovation that requires vacating adds rent or hotel costs on top of the project budget.

Finally, **landscaping and exterior cleanup** after additions, window replacements, or exterior renovations often runs \$2,000–\$8,000 and is almost never in the initial quote. Excavation around a foundation, replaced windows that disrupted exterior cladding, or a new addition that disturbed the yard all require cleanup and restoration that becomes visible only when the main work is done.

The honest contingency recommendation for NB renovations: 15–20% for standard projects, 20–25% for gut renovations of pre-1980 homes. Set that money aside before signing a contract, and treat it as insurance rather than spending money. New Brunswick Renovations can connect you with experienced local professionals who know how to assess a home's hidden conditions before construction begins — browse local renovation contractors through the New Brunswick Construction Network directory.

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Q14

## How much does HST add to renovation costs in New Brunswick?

**New Brunswick's HST rate is 15%, applied to virtually every renovation cost — labour, materials, equipment rentals, and contractor invoices — so you need to factor it into every budget line from day one.**

On a \$40,000 kitchen renovation, that's an additional \$6,000 in tax. On a \$150,000 whole-home renovation, you're looking at \$22,500 in HST on top of the base contract price. Many NB homeowners are surprised when their final invoice is noticeably higher than the original quote because they forgot to ask whether the quoted price was plus HST or HST-included.

Most professional renovation contractors in New Brunswick quote prices excluding HST, then add it as a separate line item on the invoice. This is standard practice and completely normal — it doesn't mean the contractor is inflating their price at the last minute. When you're comparing quotes from multiple contractors, always confirm whether each price is before or after HST so you're comparing apples to apples. A quote of \$35,000 plus HST is \$40,250 all-in. A quote of \$38,000 HST-included is actually cheaper, even though the number looks bigger at first glance.

HST applies to both the materials and the labour portion of any renovation contract. It also applies to materials you purchase yourself at hardware stores — there's no exemption for homeowner-purchased renovation materials. Equipment rentals are also subject to HST. The only category that sometimes creates confusion is new home construction versus renovation, but for renovation work on an existing home, 15% HST applies across the board.

**Building your budget with HST included from the start is the only way to avoid sticker shock at invoice time.** If your renovation budget is \$50,000 all-in, your actual renovation scope before tax is roughly \$43,500. Work backward from your total available budget by dividing by 1.15 to find your pre-tax renovation ceiling. On larger projects like a full gut renovation of an older Saint John or Fredericton home running \$200,000 or more, the HST component alone can be \$26,000-\$30,000 — a significant figure that deserves its own budget line.

There is a federal GST/HST New Residential Rental Property Rebate for certain scenarios, and there have historically been rebate programs for substantial renovations that essentially convert a property to like-new condition, but these are complex and situation-specific. Do not rely on rebate programs when building your renovation budget — consult a tax professional about whether your specific project might qualify for any rebate. For standard renovation work on your principal residence, plan for the full 15% HST with no offset.

Get 3+ written quotes, confirm whether they're plus HST or HST-included, and add a 15-20% contingency on top of your HST-inclusive total for unexpected discoveries — especially in NB homes built before 1980, where surprises behind walls are routine.

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Q15

## Should I get a home equity line of credit or personal loan for renovations in NB?

**For renovation financing in New Brunswick, a Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC) almost always wins over a personal loan — lower interest rates, flexible drawdowns, and interest-only payment options make it the smarter tool for most renovation projects.** That said, the right choice depends on how much equity you have in your home, how large the renovation is, and your comfort with variable-rate borrowing.

A HELOC typically carries an interest rate of prime plus 0.5-1.0%, which is substantially lower than personal loan rates that commonly run 8-15% for renovation financing. On a \$60,000 basement and kitchen renovation, the difference between 7% HELOC interest and 11% personal loan interest adds up to thousands of dollars over the repayment period. HELOCs also let you draw funds as the renovation progresses — paying the framer when framing is done, the electrician when rough-in is complete — rather than borrowing the full amount upfront and paying interest on money sitting idle. This staged drawdown structure matches the natural progression of a renovation project.

The trade-off with a HELOC is that your home is the collateral. If something goes sideways financially, your property is at risk. You also need sufficient equity to qualify — most lenders require your mortgage plus HELOC to stay below 65-80% of your home's appraised value, depending on the lender and your overall credit profile. In New Brunswick's housing market, where home values in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John have appreciated significantly over the past several years, many homeowners now have equity they didn't have five years ago.

**A personal loan makes more sense when the renovation is smaller — under \$20,000 — when you have limited home equity, or when you want a fixed monthly payment and a defined payoff date.** Personal loans have no fluctuating rate exposure if rates rise, and they don't put your property at risk. The higher interest cost is a real drawback, but the predictability and simplicity appeal to homeowners who prefer knowing exactly what they owe each month.

A third option worth knowing about is a renovation mortgage or construction loan, which allows you to borrow against the post-renovation value of your home rather than its current value. This is useful for large-scope projects — whole-home renovations, major additions, or gut renovations of older NB homes — where the renovation itself will significantly increase property value. These products are more complex to qualify for and typically require detailed project plans and contractor quotes as part of the application.

Whatever financing route you choose, remember that renovation costs in New Brunswick are real money with real consequences if the project scope creeps beyond your borrowing limit. Build a 15-20% contingency into your financing from the start — especially for older homes in Fredericton, Saint John, or any NB home built before 1980, where hidden moisture damage, outdated wiring, and foundation surprises are common. Running out of financing halfway through a gut renovation is significantly more stressful than borrowing slightly more than you think you need upfront.

Speak with your financial institution and a mortgage broker before deciding — rates, terms, and qualification criteria vary meaningfully between lenders. This is general information, not financial or tax advice.

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## What are the average material costs for renovations in New Brunswick in 2026?

**Material costs for renovations in New Brunswick in 2026 track close to the national average for most products, since building materials are largely shipped into the province — expect to budget roughly 40-60% of your total renovation cost for materials, with the remainder covering labour, permits, and disposal.**

Here's a practical breakdown of what NB homeowners are paying for common renovation materials right now.

For kitchens, stock cabinets run \$150-\$350 per linear foot; semi-custom cabinets \$300-\$600 per linear foot; and full custom cabinetry \$500-\$1,200 per linear foot. Quartz countertops — the most popular choice in NB right now — cost \$60-\$120 per square foot installed. Quartz has largely replaced granite in mid-range NB kitchens due to its durability and low maintenance in the humidity swings the Maritime climate creates. Tile backsplash materials run \$5-\$25 per square foot depending on the tile, with installation adding another \$8-\$15 per square foot in labour.

For bathrooms, a quality freestanding vanity runs \$400-\$2,000 depending on size and finish. Porcelain floor tile costs \$3-\$12 per square foot for materials; large-format tile for shower walls runs \$8-\$20 per square foot. A prefab shower unit runs \$500-\$2,500; a custom tile shower pan with linear drain and full-height tile walls can push \$3,000-\$8,000 in materials alone before any labour.

**For flooring, engineered hardwood runs \$4-\$10 per square foot in materials**, while luxury vinyl plank (LVP) — the go-to for NB basements and main floors given its moisture resistance — costs \$2-\$6 per square foot for materials. Porcelain tile runs \$3-\$12 per square foot. All of these need to be acclimated to your home's humidity before installation, which matters in NB where winter air is very dry and summer air is very humid.

For exterior work, vinyl siding materials run \$1.50-\$3.50 per square foot; fibre cement siding (HardiePlank) runs \$2.50-\$5 per square foot for materials. Architectural asphalt shingles cost \$1.50-\$3 per square foot in materials; metal roofing runs \$3-\$8 per square foot for materials before labour. Remember that installed costs are roughly double material costs for most of these products once you add skilled labour.

Insulation is a major cost category for NB renovations given the province's climate demands. Fibreglass batt insulation runs \$0.50-\$1.50 per square foot; rigid foam board \$0.75-\$2.50 per square foot; closed-cell spray foam \$2-\$4 per board foot (a critical distinction — spray foam is priced by volume, not area). Spray foam is worth the premium for basement walls and rim joists in NB, where it creates both an air seal and a vapour retarder in a single application.

Material costs have stabilized somewhat since the post-COVID spike years, but lumber, drywall, and framing materials remain elevated compared to 2019 prices. Supply chain delays are less severe than they were in 2021-2022, but specialty items — custom windows, certain tile formats, engineered lumber — can still have 4-8 week

lead times. Order materials early, especially if you're planning a spring or early summer renovation start when contractor schedules and material supplies are both under pressure across NB.

Always get your contractor's material allowances spelled out in writing — a vague 'allowance for tile' in a contract is an invitation to cost overruns. Ask for specific product specifications with unit prices for every material category in your project.

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Q17

## How do I create a realistic renovation budget for my New Brunswick home?

**A realistic NB renovation budget starts not with what you want to spend, but with what the project actually costs — get 3+ contractor quotes before finalizing any budget number, add a 15-20% contingency on top, and confirm everything includes HST.** Homeowners who reverse-engineer their budget from a number they've decided in advance almost always run short.

The first step is defining the full project scope before you talk to a single contractor. Write down every element you want — not just 'new kitchen' but new cabinets, countertops, backsplash, flooring, lighting, appliances, plumbing fixtures, and whether any walls are moving. Vague scope creates vague quotes, and vague quotes lead to surprise change orders. The more specific your scope document, the more comparable your quotes will be and the fewer cost surprises you'll encounter mid-project.

Once you have your scope, use the pricing ranges in this guide as a sanity check before quotes arrive. A mid-range kitchen renovation in NB — new cabinets, quartz countertops, new appliances, backsplash, updated lighting — runs \$25,000-\$50,000 before HST. A full bathroom gut with new tub or shower, tile, vanity, toilet, and flooring runs \$15,000-\$30,000. A standard basement finishing project runs \$20,000-\$35,000. These are real NB market numbers, not wishful thinking. If your budget is significantly below these ranges, you're either scoping a cosmetic refresh or you need to adjust expectations.

**The contingency budget is not optional — it's a required line item.** For cosmetic renovations (paint, flooring, fixtures), budget 10-15% contingency. For renovations involving structural, plumbing, or electrical work, budget 15-20%. For gut renovations of NB homes built before 1980, budget 20-25% — asbestos in floor tiles or insulation, knob-and-tube wiring, undersized drains, and deteriorated framing are common discoveries that add real cost. A Fredericton Victorian that looks solid from the outside may have decades of deferred maintenance hidden behind the walls.

Your budget spreadsheet should have at minimum these categories: contractor labour (typically 40-60% of total), materials (40-60% of total), permits and inspections (\$50-\$500 depending on municipality and project), design or architectural fees if applicable, temporary accommodation or storage if the project displaces you, disposal and demolition, and HST at 15% on everything. Many homeowners forget the soft costs — permit fees, dumpster rental, material delivery charges, and the cost of living elsewhere during major work.

**Get quotes from at least three contractors for every significant project.** NB renovation pricing varies 20-40% between contractors for identical scope, driven by overhead, crew size, current workload, and how much a contractor wants the particular job. The lowest quote is not automatically the best — compare what each includes in scope, the quality of materials specified, the payment terms, the timeline, and the contractor's references. A \$5,000 difference in quotes often evaporates quickly if the cheaper contractor is light on detail, skips permits, or uses lower-grade materials.

Finally, build your timeline into the budget planning. NB exterior work happens May through October. If you're targeting a spring start and the contractor has a 6-week backlog, your April-start plan becomes a June start. Interior renovations can run year-round, but material deliveries in NB winters can be delayed by weather, and material acclimation matters — hardwood flooring delivered from a cold warehouse needs time to stabilize in your heated home before installation. Plan for the full project cycle, not just the construction days.

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Q18

## What percentage of my home value should I spend on renovations in NB?

**The traditional guideline is to keep any single renovation to under 10-15% of your home's current market value, and total renovation investment to under 25-30% of value — but in New Brunswick's market, the more important question is whether the renovation serves your own enjoyment and needs, since recouping full renovation costs at resale is rarely guaranteed.** Percentages are a useful guardrail, not a formula.

The risk of over-renovating — spending more than the market will support — is real in some NB communities. If your home is worth \$250,000 and you invest \$100,000 in a complete kitchen and bathroom overhaul, you're unlikely to recoup the full \$100,000 at sale, because comparable homes in your neighbourhood may cap out at \$320,000-\$350,000 regardless of interior finishes. This is sometimes called 'pricing yourself out of the neighbourhood.' It's most relevant if you're renovating primarily to sell, or if you're in a smaller NB community with a compressed price ceiling.

**In Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John, where home values have climbed substantially since 2020, the math on renovations is more favourable than it was five years ago.** A \$400,000 home that renovates for \$80,000 and sells for \$520,000 is a common enough outcome in the current market that the percentage rule should be considered a starting point for discussion, not a hard ceiling. Renovations that improve energy efficiency, replace failing systems (roof, windows, electrical panels, insulation), or modernize kitchens and bathrooms consistently add more value than cosmetic-only refreshes.

For investment properties or homes you plan to sell within 2-3 years, a practical approach is to prioritize renovations with the highest return. Historically, kitchen renovations return 75-85 cents on the dollar, bathroom renovations return 70-80 cents, and energy efficiency upgrades can return 80-100 cents on the dollar given how much NB buyers care about heating costs. Exterior upgrades — new siding, windows, and roofing — return 60-80 cents on the dollar but are often non-negotiable when existing materials are failing.

**For your long-term home — the house you plan to live in for 10+ years — the percentage calculation matters less than the quality and appropriateness of the renovation.** Spending \$60,000 on a kitchen renovation in a \$300,000 Fredericton home may exceed the 15% guideline, but if that kitchen serves your family for the next 20 years and you love it every day, the lifestyle value exceeds the resale arithmetic. The homeowners who regret over-renovating are usually the ones who renovated to sell and misjudged the market. The ones who renovated to live rarely regret investing in quality.

A few NB-specific considerations worth noting: energy efficiency renovations carry extra weight in this province because heating costs are a real line item for every buyer. A well-insulated home with a modern heat pump, updated windows, and sealed air barrier is noticeably easier to sell in NB than an identical home that costs \$3,000/year more to heat. Buyers do the math. Older NB homes (pre-1980) often need significant investment just to

bring them up to current standards before cosmetic improvements even begin — budgeting for electrical upgrades, plumbing modernization, insulation, and windows as a baseline before luxury finishes is the right sequence.

Get an appraisal or at minimum a real estate agent's honest assessment before committing to a major renovation on a home you plan to sell. Knowing your current value, your neighbourhood's price ceiling, and what buyers in your area actually want helps you make renovation investment decisions that are financially sound as well as personally satisfying.

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## How much does it cost to renovate a century home in Fredericton NB?

**Renovating a century home in Fredericton is one of the most rewarding — and most expensive — renovation projects in New Brunswick, with full gut renovations running \$150-\$250 per square foot and comprehensive updates on a 1,500-2,000 sq ft home easily reaching \$200,000-\$400,000 once all the hidden discoveries are accounted for.** The character is irreplaceable; the surprises are inevitable.

Fredericton's heritage neighbourhoods — Old North Side, Skyline Acres' older sections, the Woodstock Road corridor, and the downtown residential streets — are full of beautiful Victorian, Edwardian, and early 20th-century homes. Many of these properties have original hardwood floors, intricate trim details, plaster walls, and architectural character that modern homes simply can't replicate. Preserving and restoring those elements while bringing the home up to current building code, energy efficiency standards, and modern comfort is the central challenge of century home renovation.

The mechanical systems in most century Fredericton homes require complete replacement. Knob-and-tube wiring (common in homes built before 1950) is a safety hazard and must be replaced — a full rewire of a 1,500-2,000 sq ft home costs \$15,000-\$30,000 or more. Galvanized steel or lead supply pipes (in homes built before 1960) must be replaced with copper or PEX, typically \$8,000-\$20,000 depending on the home's size and layout complexity. Heating systems in century homes are often converted from oil to a heat pump and electric combination, running \$8,000-\$20,000. These mechanical upgrades are not optional — they're prerequisites before any finish work begins.

**Insulation is almost always deficient in century homes.** Original wall cavities were either empty or filled with horsehair and wood shavings. Attics may have had early cellulose or fibreglass added at some point, but rarely to modern NB standards. Properly insulating a century Fredericton home without destroying the plaster walls often means blowing cellulose into the wall cavities from the exterior, then re-siding, or accepting a reduction in interior wall depth by adding rigid foam behind new drywall. A comprehensive insulation upgrade runs \$15,000-\$40,000 depending on approach and scope.

Foundation issues are extremely common. Stone, brick, and early poured-concrete foundations settle over a century, and the drainage systems that were adequate in 1910 are overwhelmed by today's spring snowmelt loads. Expect to address foundation waterproofing, drainage, and potentially structural crack repair — budgeting \$10,000-\$30,000 for foundation work is prudent for most century Fredericton homes.

For homes in Fredericton's designated heritage areas or if your property has a formal heritage designation, renovation plans may require review by Heritage Branch of the Province of New Brunswick. This doesn't mean you can't renovate — it means certain exterior changes (window styles, roofline modifications, exterior materials visible

from the street) need to be handled respectfully. Working with a contractor experienced in heritage renovation is essential in these situations, and it's worth the extra care to preserve what makes these homes special.

**The contingency budget for a century home renovation should be 20-25% of your project estimate, minimum.** Behind those gorgeous plaster walls you may find active mould from decades of inadequate vapour management, structural members that were sistered or notched by previous owners in ways that compromise their integrity, and asbestos in pipe insulation, floor tiles, or textured ceiling coatings. NB homes built before 1990 are presumed to potentially contain asbestos-containing materials — professional testing before demolition is strongly recommended, and abatement when found is legally required and adds real cost.

Century homes in Fredericton are worth the investment for the right buyer with the right expectations and budget. Work with a contractor who has genuine experience with older NB homes, get a thorough pre-renovation building inspection, and plan your budget based on a full scope — mechanical, envelope, structural, and finishes — rather than hoping the scope stays narrow. It rarely does, and that's not a failure; it's just the reality of 100-year-old construction.

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Q20

## Are there government grants or rebates for home renovations in New Brunswick in 2026?

**Yes, several government programs exist in 2026 to help New Brunswick homeowners offset renovation costs — the most significant are energy efficiency rebate programs through NB Power and federal programs through Natural Resources Canada, which can provide \$1,000-\$10,000+ in incentives for qualifying energy upgrades.** The landscape of these programs changes regularly, so confirming current program status and eligibility requirements directly with the administering agency is essential before planning your budget around any rebate.

NB Power's Home Energy Savings Program (or its successor programs — NB Power has restructured these offerings in recent years) has historically provided rebates for heat pump installation, insulation upgrades, air sealing, and window replacements meeting minimum efficiency thresholds. Heat pump rebates have ranged from \$500-\$2,000 per unit depending on the equipment type and efficiency rating, with cold-climate heat pumps (essential for NB winters) often qualifying for higher rebate tiers. Insulation upgrades — particularly attic insulation brought up to R-50 or higher — have qualified for per-square-foot rebates that can add up meaningfully on a larger NB home. Check [nbpower.com](http://nbpower.com) directly for current program details and rebate amounts.

At the federal level, the Canada Greener Homes program has been one of the more substantial renovation rebate offerings in recent years, providing grants of up to \$5,600 for registered energy efficiency upgrades combined with a free pre and post-renovation EnerGuide energy assessment. The assessment itself is valuable — it gives you a detailed picture of where your home is losing energy and which upgrades will deliver the best return. Federal programs are administered by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) and require that upgrades be completed by registered contractors using qualified products. Visit [nrcan.gc.ca](http://nrcan.gc.ca) for current program status, as federal program funding and eligibility have evolved significantly.

**A critical point: most rebate programs require a pre-renovation energy assessment and pre-approval before work begins.** You cannot complete the renovation first and then apply for the rebate. The sequence matters — book your EnerGuide assessment, get your application or pre-approval in place, complete the eligible work with a registered contractor, get the post-work assessment, and then receive the rebate. Skipping steps disqualifies you from the program, full stop.

For lower-income NB homeowners, there are additional programs worth investigating. Efficiency NB and related provincial programs have offered deeper subsidies for households that meet income thresholds, sometimes providing grants covering a larger portion of energy efficiency upgrade costs. The federal Greener Homes Loan program (distinct from the grant) has offered interest-free financing for eligible upgrades when grant amounts don't cover the full cost — a useful bridge financing tool.

For heritage properties in Fredericton, Saint John, or Saint Andrews with formal heritage designation, there may be municipal or provincial heritage conservation programs that provide grants or tax relief for preservation-appropriate renovations. Contact your municipal heritage officer or the Province's Heritage Branch for current offerings.

Worth noting: general cosmetic renovations — kitchen remodels, flooring, bathroom refreshes — do not qualify for government rebate programs. Programs are targeted at energy efficiency, structural safety, and accessibility modifications. If you're renovating for energy performance (insulation, windows, heat pump, air sealing, HRV installation), there is real money available to offset costs. If you're renovating for aesthetics alone, there are no government programs that will reduce your cost.

Get quotes from contractors familiar with the rebate application process — some contractors are registered participants in NB Power and federal programs and can streamline the paperwork. Confirm everything in writing, and never count on a rebate cheque in your initial financing plan. Treat any rebate as a bonus that arrives after project completion, not as upfront funding you're counting on to make the project work financially.

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Q21

## What is the average deposit a renovation contractor asks for in New Brunswick?

**A legitimate renovation contractor in New Brunswick should ask for a deposit of 10-20% of the total contract value upfront, with the remainder structured as milestone payments tied to completed stages of work — never pay more than 30% before work begins, and be very cautious of any contractor demanding 50% or more upfront.** The deposit protects the contractor against client cancellation and covers initial material orders; it should not be a significant profit advance.

For smaller renovation projects under \$20,000 — a bathroom update, basement framing, exterior door installation — a deposit of \$1,000-\$2,500 is common and reasonable. For mid-range projects running \$30,000-\$80,000, a \$3,000-\$10,000 deposit (roughly 10-15%) is standard across the NB market. For larger whole-home renovations or full additions, some contractors will structure the deposit lower as a percentage because the total value is high and a smaller percentage still provides adequate assurance.

**The payment structure beyond the deposit matters just as much as the deposit amount.** A well-structured renovation contract in NB typically looks like this: 10-15% deposit on signing, 25-30% at project commencement (when materials arrive and work begins in earnest), 25-30% at a defined mid-project milestone (rough-in inspections passed, structure complete), 20-25% as work is substantially completed, and 10% holdback retained until final inspection and deficiencies are corrected. That holdback is your leverage to ensure every detail is finished properly.

Provincial construction law in New Brunswick provides some protection through lien holdback provisions — owners are entitled to hold back a percentage of payment as protection against liens by subcontractors or material suppliers. Your contract should address this explicitly. Ask your contractor how they handle their subs and suppliers, because a GC who doesn't pay their electrician or lumber yard on time can create a lien on your property even if you paid the GC in full.

**A contractor demanding 40-50% or more upfront is a serious red flag**, particularly for smaller operations without an established local track record. This deposit size means they're asking you to fund their business operations rather than your project. Legitimate contractors with good cash flow, supplier credit, and a stable business do not need a large upfront cash injection to start your job. When someone you've never worked with asks for \$25,000 before a hammer swings, that's the moment to ask for references, verify their WorkSafeNB coverage, and check their business history carefully.

Always tie your payment schedule explicitly to project milestones, not to dates on the calendar. Paying \$15,000 on March 15th regardless of project progress gives you no leverage if work stalls. Paying \$15,000 when the plumbing rough-in inspection is passed and the walls are closed gives the contractor incentive to hit that milestone and gives you assurance that you're paying for completed work.

Get every payment term in writing as part of your contract — the deposit amount, the milestone definitions, the holdback percentage, the timeline for final payment, and what happens if either party defaults. A verbal agreement on payment terms is unenforceable when a dispute arises. This is one of the most common sources of renovation disputes in NB, and a simple, clearly worded payment schedule in the contract prevents most of them.

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