

Performance Results for 2021-22 CF West Yellowhead

Community Futures (CF) is a program that supports community economic development and builds the capacity of communities to realize their full sustainable potential. The purpose of the CF Program is to help communities develop and implement *local solutions to local problems*.

Community Futures Performance Results	2021-22
<i>Strong rural community strategic planning and implementation</i>	
1. Total number of community-based projects (new & on-going)	26+11
2. Total number of local and regionally-based community strategic plans developed and/or updated	4
<i>Rural access to business development services</i>	
3. Total number of business training session participants	353
4. Total number of business advisory services	989
<i>Rural access to capital and leveraged capital</i>	
5. Dollar value of loans	\$1,207,078
6. Total number of loans	38
7. Number of jobs created/maintained/expanded through lending ¹	59
Provide additional information (e.g. Success stories, Links to priorities, leveraging work, communication events, etc...)	
<p>The 2021-2022 fiscal year was a year of change for Community Futures West Yellowhead. Heading into the second year of the pandemic was unexpected and we took the opportunity to try new things in our organization and to embrace uncertainty while planning for our future as an organization. Our theme of potential change mirrors the growth and expansion in the West Yellowhead and even though some sectors such as tourism were drastically impacted by the pandemic, other industries were thriving in 2021-2022. As an organization, we needed to keep up with the economic changes as we became more innovative to support our local business communities. Construction in pipelines, carbon capture, electricity generation, coal mines, pumped hydro, aquaponics, and geothermal energy in the West Yellowhead is proving to be a growth factor for our region and is a sharp contrast to the struggles of our retail and tourism sectors. The West Yellowhead has always had a strong economy since there is such a diverse range of industries in our region. Once again, this year, we experience tremendous growth in some sectors and a deep decline in others due to the pandemic.</p> <p>In September 2021, our long time Business Analyst left the organization after 11 years of employment and in October 2021, CFWY welcomed a new board of directors after the Alberta municipal election. In preparation for both these events, the past board of directors created a new strategic plan in June 2021. These events, along with the creation of a new position of Community Economic Development Coordinator in the organization for the 2022-2023 fiscal year, brought many and exciting organizational changes to our organization. CFWY also had a PrairiesCan</p>	

¹ Estimated at the time of lending

loan compliance audit and embracing our theme of change, the staff completed an internal review of our annual loan reviews process and implemented it by fiscal year end in March.

Community Futures West Yellowhead, along with the CFs in the province, created a new website with updated branding and marketing in 2021. This new website is another accomplishment that allows us to be more focused in our marketing and branding in the region and allows us greater accessibility to the West Yellowhead region and new and existing clients.

Community Futures West Yellowhead completed two Rural Opportunities Fund projects in 2021-2022 entitled "Economic Diversification and Energy Transition in the West Yellowhead" and "Supporting Local on the Road to Recovery: #choosewestyellowhead." These projects are summarized in this report and were an opportunity for CFWY to access community economic development dollars for our region.

During the pandemic, CFWY staff and board realized we needed to be more strategic in meeting the need of our business clients. In the fall of 2021 and the spring of 2022, business visitation surveys were completed by CFWY staff throughout the West Yellowhead region. The Fall 2021 business visitation focused on active storefront locations in Jasper, Grande Cache, Hinton, Edson, Niton Junction, Wildwood, Peers, Evansburg and Carrot Creek and focused on strategic conversations based on energy consumption and possible energy savings opportunities for businesses, training needs, and other CFWY programming opportunities. Due to the federal and municipal election, staff chose to conduct the fall visits without chamber volunteers, board members or local politicians. However, by spring 2022, all these groups were included, and we were able to include all our municipalities, local chambers, MLA and MP in our business visitations with a total of 20 volunteers allowing us to visit more businesses and have conversations about our role in supporting businesses in the pandemic. Both these reports are summarized in this report.