

Performance Results for 2024-25 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		2024-25
<i>Strong rural community strategic planning and implementation</i>		
1. Total number of community-based projects (new & on-going)		18
2. Total number of local and regionally-based community strategic plans developed and/or updated		1
<i>Rural access to business development services</i>		
3. Total number of business training session participants		127
4. Total number of business advisory services		979
<i>Rural access to capital and leveraged capital</i>		
5. Dollar value of loans		\$184,020
6. Total number of loans		8
7. Number of jobs created/maintained/expanded through lending ¹		46
Provide additional Information (e.g. Success stories, Links to priorities, leveraging work, communication events, etc.)		

¹ Estimated at the time of lending

2024/2025 proved to be our most challenging year to date.

The evacuation and subsequent wildfire in Jasper in July 2024 greatly influenced the staff, management and board of the organization and as a result, influenced our operational capacity in ways that we did not anticipate. After July 22, 2024, CFWY committed to enhancing our staff's capacity to deal with re-entry and recovery efforts for our staff, board and our businesses in Jasper National Park. The impact of this event has changed and touched our organization in ways that we did not predict, and we are committed to assisting Jasper's businesses to a full and successful recovery over the next few years.

Despite these personal and organizational challenges in 2024/2025, CFWY had a successful year. The reality is our organization is operating in a crisis environment starting in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing with the 2022 with the Chetamon fire in Jasper National Park, the 2023 Edson and Yellowhead County fires and floods, and the 2024 Jasper Wildfire. Despite these challenges, CFWY remains committed to offering the Community Futures program in the West Yellowhead and our staff, with the tremendous support of our Board of Directors, have risen to the task. We have collectively worked together to meet our region's challenges with organizational support to small businesses with many accomplishments in the past year.

In terms of business coaching, CFWY has exceeded expectations as we worked to support all our region's businesses through the challenges presented by the 2024 Jasper wildfire. Our businesses reached out to us to help them navigate re-entry procedures, business continuity plans, cash flow and even new start-ups in the region with business planning support.

Business loans were again lower this fiscal year and is a sign of the continued crisis in the West Yellowhead in the past five years. Economic crisis in the region is compounded by uncertainty with tariffs and economic uncertainty both nationally and internationally. Start-ups are occurring in the region, but they are often reluctant to accumulate debt, so our loans are smaller in the amounts dispersed and less frequent in the number of applications we receive. It is our hope that we can address this core service in the next few years and increase our loan portfolio in the region. Building entrepreneurship is difficult in crisis but we still encourage start up, expansion and maintenance loans with our regional business community.

Business training services were also reduced in this fiscal year as operationally, we cancelled or postponed all our training offerings after July 22, 2024. Thanks to a partnership with the Business Link, we restarted our lunch and learns in Q4, and that partnership was greatly appreciated as we needed to re-brand and re-focus after the wildfire event.

Community economic development initiatives were very successful this past fiscal year. CFWY is appreciative of the support from PrairiesCan in Jasper's economic recovery and our work in supporting Jasper's businesses through the Jasper Recovery Program was impactful and \$2.175 million in non-repayable grants were dispersed by March 2025 to assist in recovery.

Other organizational successes include:

- Creation of three new positions in our organization: Community Economic Development Coordinator, Office Administrator and Jasper Recovery Program Coordinator.
- Completion of a new strategic plan for the next five years by the Board of Directors
- Adapt and Overcome Award 2025 at the Community Futures Network of Alberta Annual Symposium
- \$50,000 in Municipal funding from our five municipal shareholders: Municipality of Jasper, Town of Hinton, Town of Edson, Municipal District of Greenview and Yellowhead County

