



ANNUAL REPORT

**COMMUNITY FUTURES
NETWORK OF ALBERTA
2021-2022**

Community
Futures 
Alberta

COMMUNITY FUTURES NETWORK OF ALBERTA



The Community Futures Network of Alberta provides advocacy, leadership, stewardship, and operational support to the network of 27 Alberta Community Futures organizations. In addition, CFNA manages a pool of funds called the Community Futures Lending & Investment Pool (CFLIP) for the purpose of providing a strong loan fund for Alberta entrepreneurs.

The CFNA Board is representative of the 27 Alberta Community Futures organizations. The role of the Board of Directors is to provide strategic direction for the organization.

CFNA Board 2021/22

- **Chair, John Husch**
Volunteer, South Region, CF Crowsnest Pass
- **Vice-Chair, Vanessa Simonin**
Volunteer, North West Region, CF Capital Region

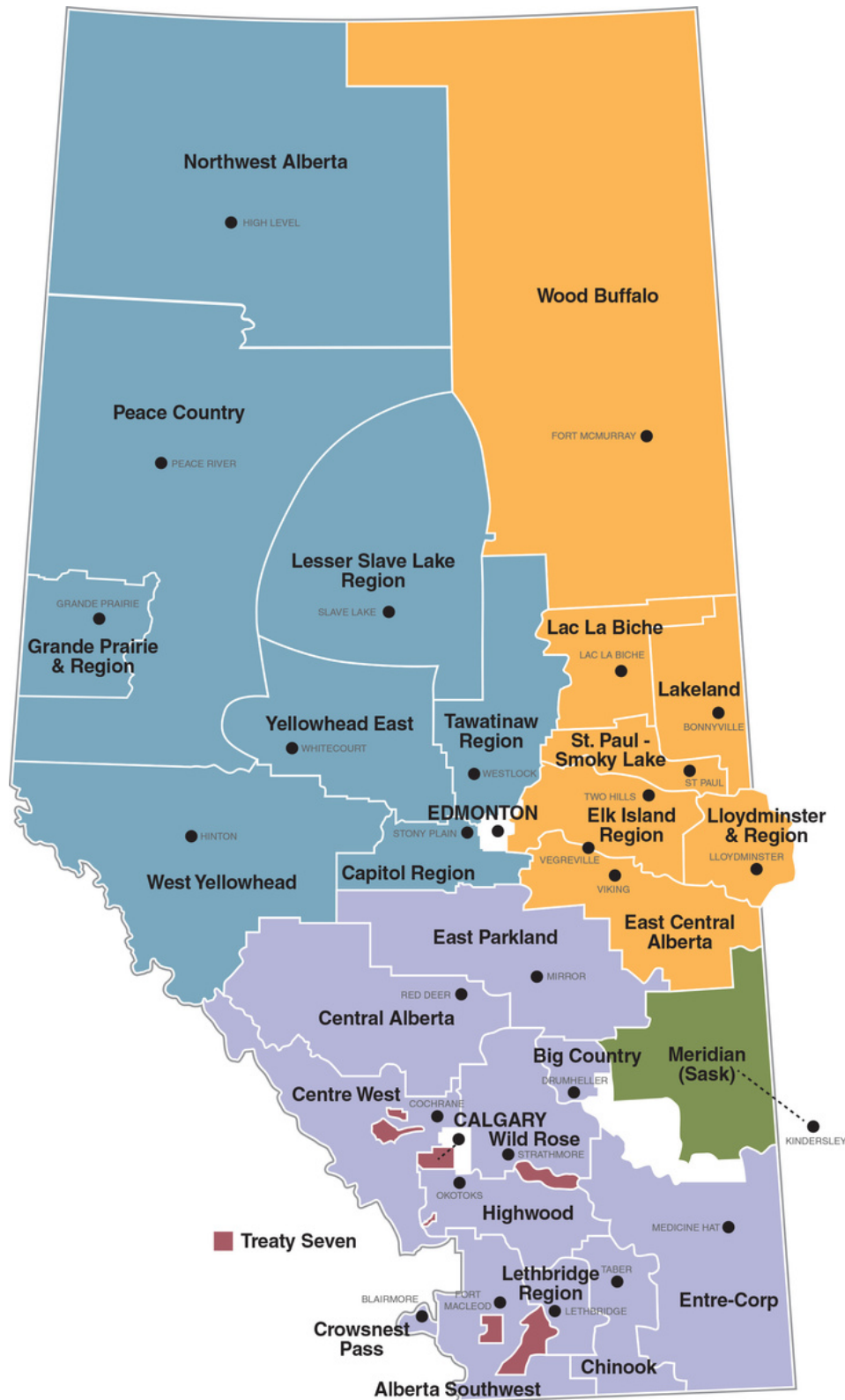
- **Director, Warren Toews**
Volunteer, North West Region, CF Grande Prairie & Region
- **Director, Debra McQuinn**
Volunteer, North East Region, CF St. Paul - Smoky Lake
- **Director, Russell Crook**
Volunteer, South Region, CF Central Alberta
- **Director, Tony Walker**
Manager, South Region, CF Alberta Southwest
- **Director, Josh Friesen**
Manager, North West Region, CF Lesser Slave Lake
- **Director, Gene Wesley**
Manager, North East Region, CF Lac La Biche
- **Director, Chantale Sangster**
Manager, South Region, CF Wild Rose

A special thank you to:

- Wayne Schultz - Volunteer, CF Highwood
- Ben Fadewiw - Volunteer, CF Lakeland
- Nancy Robbins - Manager, CF West Yellowhead

ALBERTA NETWORK

The Alberta network is made up of 27 independent Community Futures organizations that support rural small and medium-sized businesses.





Message from the Chair

As I reflect on 2021-2022 it has been another roller-coaster year as we continue to pivot operations to respond to the demands created by the global pandemic.

I am very proud of our Community Futures Network of Alberta (CFNA) staff and board members for their resilience and commitment to finding new ways of supporting our member offices and their clients during this challenging time.

With the support of our funder, PrairiesCan, we very successfully executed the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF). Not only were we able to support more than 1700 businesses with this program but escalated the identity of the Community Futures program across Canada.

The focus with this program has now moved to supporting the RRRF clients to meet their repayment commitments.

As we look to the future, the CFNA is on a journey to better connect with not only our shareholders to understand and advocate for their challenges but seek out new partnerships that can make the Community Futures offering even better for clients.

It appears that the Community Futures program is at a point where it requires modernization in the form of increased funding, greater flexibility to serve their clients and increased lending limits.

In spite of the many challenges faced, we should be proud of our accomplishments this past year and optimistic as we head into to the coming year.



John Husch - Chair of the Board
Community Futures Network of Alberta



A photograph of a man and a woman standing in a greenhouse. The man on the left has a grey beard, glasses, and is wearing a plaid shirt and tan apron. The woman on the right has dark hair tied up and is wearing a light blue shirt and green apron. They are both smiling and have their arms crossed. The background shows various plants in pots on shelves.

Message from the Executive Director

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

- Winston Churchill

Throughout the 2021-2022 fiscal year we *have* continued. We have continued to support each other through difficult days, weeks and sometimes, months at a time.

We have continued to provide guidance and support to our clients and our communities. We have continued to strengthen and grow our partnerships. We have done all these things while dealing with uncertainties, staff shortages, high levels of stress, higher than average work loads and all sorts of "new norms".

Although we have faced challenges in the last year, we have also continued to see successes and growth in many areas.

The Regional Recovery & Relief Fund (RRRF) provided our offices the with an opportunity to engage with clients who may not have previously known of Community Futures and the services each office provides. Not only have we been able to rekindle and strengthen relationships with our existing partners because of this program, we've also been able to develop entirely new partnerships.

CFNA continues to advocate for Alberta CF's and we are seeing positive results with the introduction of new programs and funding from sources other than the Federal government.

I want to thank every single volunteer, staff member and our funders for their strength and resiliency over this past year. I am excited for new beginnings, new ideas and new projects in the coming year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phyllis Maki".

Phyllis Maki - Executive Director
Community Futures Network of Alberta



NETWORK IMPACT



Community Futures is a federally funded 'rural grassroots' program that provides business loans, training, coaching, and supports community economic development projects.

10,188

CLIENTS SERVED

\$29M

VALUE OF CLIENT LOANS

1709

**JOBS CREATED / MAINTAINED /
EXPANDED**

254

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

906

**NUMBER OF COMMUNITY-BASED
PROJECTS**

Source: Prairies Economic Development Canada

FINANCIAL RELIEF FOR SMALL BUSINESS

The Regional Relief and Recovery Fund was directed toward rural and remote businesses that required financial help to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and were unable to access existing federal business support programs. The Community Futures Network of Alberta served as project management for this initiative within the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan. Community Futures locations in Alberta concluded accepting RRRF applications on June 30, 2021.

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“My new small business was just getting on its feet when COVID-19 struck. The impacts were devastating. After reaching out to and being guided by Community Futures, we were able to rally back and adapt to our new reality.”

RRRF Loan Client

Community Futures Regional Relief and Recovery Fund program totals in Alberta*:

- Disbursed **\$85 million** in loans
- Supported more than **1700** rural businesses
- Helped maintain **9500 jobs** in Alberta

*Alberta RRRF Community Futures stream
May 2020 - March 31, 2022



SPOTLIGHT:

FUTURE-FORWARD STRATEGY

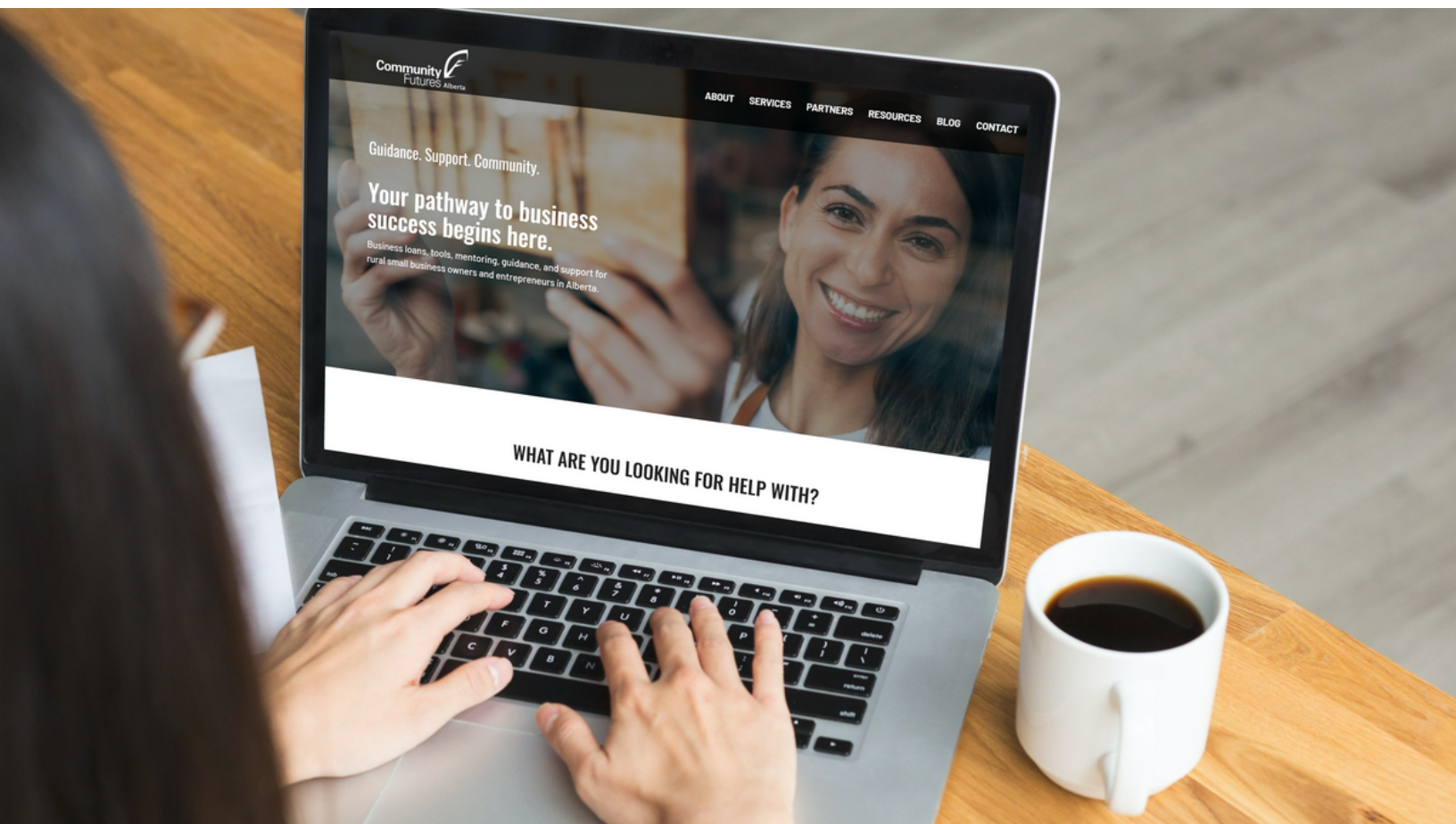
Leaders and organizations that embrace transformation don't wait for change - they look for it. We are living in an era of adaptation. Technology has revolutionized how people and businesses interact. Over this past year, the Community Futures program in Alberta repositioned its online presence making it easier for local teams to reach a growing audience of rural entrepreneurs whose habits and preferences have shifted.

People Helping People

The CFNA led the redevelopment of Community Futures websites increasing centralized security, privacy compliance and industry-standard best practices. A small team worked with each Community Futures location to shape strategy and deliver personal and value-driven experiences for clients. This project's aim was to enhance the already strong impact of the Community Futures brand - solidifying the program as a key first point of contact for local entrepreneurs.

Digital Transformation

Adapting and upgrading technology offered local staff and teams the opportunity to engage in ongoing capacity-building and business learning. CFNA also offered a 6-month online series on digital marketing knowledge applications and skills.



A NETWORK THAT IS READY FOR TOMORROW

Provincial Visibility

As public health measures eased, the CFNA returned to in-person Alberta conferences and events. With a cohort of local members, Community Futures engaged with key provincial decision-makers and leaders in economic development at provincial events. Continuing the CF program's advocacy for recovery for rural small businesses and communities.

Small Business Resources

In response to a significant increase in early start-up and small business inquiries across Alberta, a joint project between Community Futures and the Business Link was initiated. A library of practical self-serve resources was developed to support small businesses - no matter where they are located - with consistent education, information and step-by-step support.

Building a Community of Partners

Collaborating with other small business champions expanded the Community Futures' program impact and reach. We are proud to have grown our network of partners to include:

- Alberta Chambers of Commerce
- Alberta Community & Co-operative Association
- Alberta Municipalities (Formerly AUMA)
- Alberta Women Entrepreneurs
- Business Link
- Community Futures Network of Canada
- Community Futures Pan West Network
- Economic Developers Alberta
- Government of Alberta
- Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA)
- Women's Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub
- Women Entrepreneurs-in-STEM (WESTEM)



PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

ENTREPRENEURS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM

45

Clients Served
EDP 2021/22

The Alberta Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program is designed to support entrepreneurs with a self-disclosed disability or ongoing health condition through one-to-one business coaching, or by funding external training opportunities. With a network of strategically located coaches, participants have access to a wealth of knowledge and capacity-building opportunity. EDP also offers funding support for marketing and special projects to the Alberta CF offices (on a cost-sharing basis), as well as disability awareness training for front-line CF staff, and partnership development with provincial disability agencies.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

EDP Website

Intended to be shared with EDP clients - this dedicated online presence offers a new array of tools and resources, along with program success stories and details.

New Award

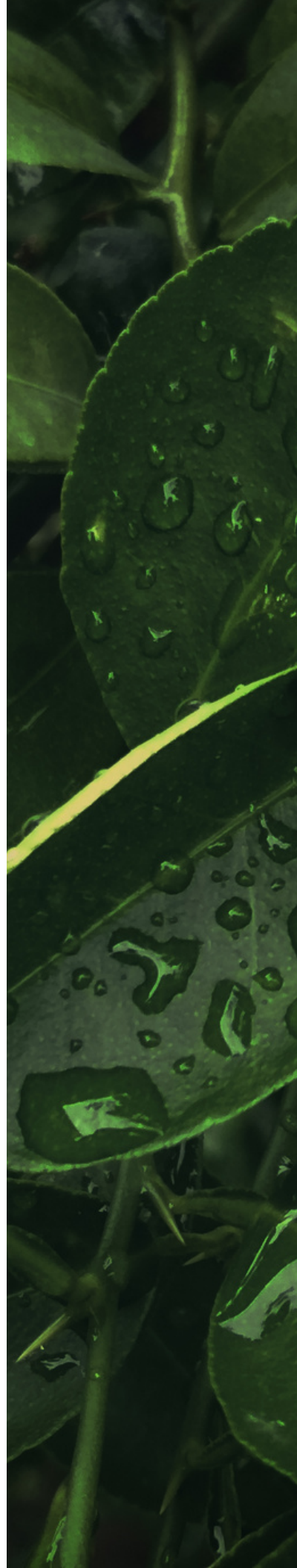
The creation of the EDP "Changing Lives" award recognized Alberta Community Futures locations that had recently adopted the program. The 2021 award winners had, between them, brought eight new participants into the program and two of those participants have launched successful businesses.

SHAWNA KONTZIE

Travel Agent

Rocky Mountain House, Alberta

"Because of the effects COVID has had on the travel industry, I have had to pivot in my plans. The experience I had working with the program was amazing. I loved working with a coach to help me digest all the stepsmaking small changes and implementing things in small portions."





PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY AND OPPORTUNITIES PROJECT (CROP)

This regional project is Community Futures-led, and is part of the Canada Coal Transition Initiative (CCTI) - supporting skills development and helping communities adapt to a low-carbon economy.

Modeled off other successful Community Futures disaster-recovery programs in Alberta, the project adapted even further this year to address the challenges of an economic transition and COVID-19.

As communities struggled, local coordinators increased the project's reach. They connected deeper with regional governments and development agencies. Added support for new entrepreneurs, and accelerated one-on-one coaching and online training for existing local businesses.

Project Performance 2021 -2022:

- # of SMEs assisted = **296**
- # of Businesses created, maintained, or expanded = **52**
- # of Participants trained = **501**
- # of Partners engaged in community-based projects = **19**

Community Futures project partners:

Meridian Region
Capital Region
East Parkland
East Central Alberta



INFRASTRUCTURE AND SECURITY

Over the last year, the Community Futures Network of Alberta, in partnership with the Community Futures Pan West Network, assisted member offices to establish a baseline for Cyber Security Risk. Through an assessment and consultancy process, recommended upgrades and/or changes were possible with added financial support.



LEADERSHIP

2021 Awards

Ev Arlidge Unsung Hero Award
Tim Shain, CF West Yellowhead

Excellence & Innovation Award
Maskawisiw Women in Business Start Up Program
CF Central Alberta

Volunteer of the Year Award
Elisa Brosseau, CF Lakeland

Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program "Changing Lives" Award
CF Lloydminster & Region
CF East Parkland

Members Services

Group Benefits	Microsoft 365
Group RSP program	Bulletproof Support &
D/O Liability Insurance	Exchange Server
Travel Insurance	DocuSign

Network Support

130

NUMBER OF COMMUNITY FUTURES EMPLOYEES IN ALBERTA

CFNA PROVIDES SERVICES AND SUPPORT TO THE
27 REGIONAL COMMUNITY FUTURES OFFICES IN THE
PROVINCE



Community Futures Lending and Investment Pool (CFLIP)

Managed by the Community Futures Network of Alberta, Community Futures shareholders can deposit cash into the pool when they have a surplus or withdraw from the pool for the purpose of business loans. The CFLIP loan pool fund is overseen by Fiera Capital, an independent investment management firm.

CFLIP Audited Statements

The Community Futures Lending and Investment Pool audited financial statements are reported independently of CFNA financial operating reports and statements.

CFNA Audited Financial Statements

