

Community Futures  
Network of Alberta

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**





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 2019/20

- **Chair, Lloyd Kearl**  
Volunteer, South Region, CF Alberta Southwest
- **Vice-Chair, John Husch**  
Volunteer, South Region, CF Crowsnest Pass
- **Treasurer, Vanessa Simonin**  
Volunteer, North West Region, CF Capital Region
- **Secretary, Kevin Spahich**  
Volunteer, North East Region, CF Lloydminster
- **Director, Matthew Creighton**  
Volunteer, North East Region, CF Wood Buffalo
- **Director, Wayne Schultz**  
Volunteer, South Region, CF Highwood
- **Director, Warren Toews**  
Volunteer, North West Region, CF Grande Prairie
- **Director, Kelly Kierluk**  
Manager, South Region, CF Central Alberta
- **Director, Nancy Robbins**  
Manager, North West Region, CF West Yellowhead
- **Director, Gene Wesley**  
Manager, North East Region, CF Lac La Biche
- **Director, David Petrovich**  
Manager, South Region, CF Wild Rose

A special thank you to: Sean Blewett - Manager, South Region, CF Chinook & CF Entre-Corp

## Community Futures Network of Alberta

We provide advocacy, leadership, stewardship, and operational support to the network of 27 Alberta Community Futures organizations. We support local solutions to challenges and opportunities in the areas of economic stability, growth, diversification and job creation. 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.

Community Futures is supported by:



Western Economic  
Diversification Canada

Diversification de l'économie  
de l'Ouest Canada

Canada

# NETWORK IMPACT

## 2019/20

The Alberta network is made up of 27 independent local offices that support small and medium-sized businesses that banks cannot serve. The mandate is to help rural communities develop sustainably and implement local solutions for economic stability, growth and job creation. Community Futures is a federally funded 'rural grassroots' program that provides business loans, training & coaching, and supports community economic development projects.

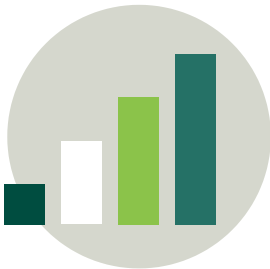


**CLIENTS SERVED**

**9209**

**VALUE OF CLIENT  
LOANS**

**\$22M**



**BUSINESSES CREATED /  
MAINTAINED / EXPANDED  
THROUGH BUSINESS SERVICES**

**816**

**NUMBER OF  
VOLUNTEERS**

**254**



**NUMBER OF NEW  
COMMUNITY-  
BASED PROJECTS**

**512**





# Message from CFNA Leadership

Community Futures exists to make entrepreneurship possible for more Albertans. In 2019, we shifted the Community Futures Network of Alberta to reorient ourselves towards the ever-changing rural economic landscape and accelerate the achievement of our mission.

## Year in Review

In 2019, we welcomed Phyllis Maki as our new Executive Director to the organization and developed a 3-year strategic plan focused on the pillars of:

- Relationships
- Innovation
- Service
- Growth

As advocates for our network members, we worked to re-establish our connections as leaders in rural small business support and economic development with the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub and the Economic Developers of Alberta.

Small and medium-sized businesses continued to be challenged by the impacts of low oil prices and environmental policy shifts. We have increased our efforts to ensure members have access to the best practices, tools and resources they need to help rural and remote businesses meet the ever-increasing challenges, and to champion local small business as the backbone of Alberta's economic future and recovery.

Together, we would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to this year's CFNA Board of Directors, and especially to our interim management team and outgoing Chair Lloyd Kearl. Their leadership and guidance have been vital to our business continuity and representation within the Community Futures Pan West Network and the Community Futures Network of Canada.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of Western Economic Diversification Canada, and their continued support of our organization to advance the importance of rural economic development through small business growth.

## The Year Ahead

We move through a difficult economic period only to find many more challenges stretching before us, and we are keenly aware we cannot be complacent in this environment. Community Futures has a strong program model with a proven track record during tough times. Today, we are stronger than we were and are striving to adapt and be flexible enough to shift to whatever new realities lay before us. This enduring resilience – combined with the incredible dedication of our members – gives us confidence that Community Futures' biggest milestones are still ahead.



John Husch - Acting Chair  
Community Futures Network of Alberta



Phyllis Maki - Executive Director  
Community Futures Network of Alberta



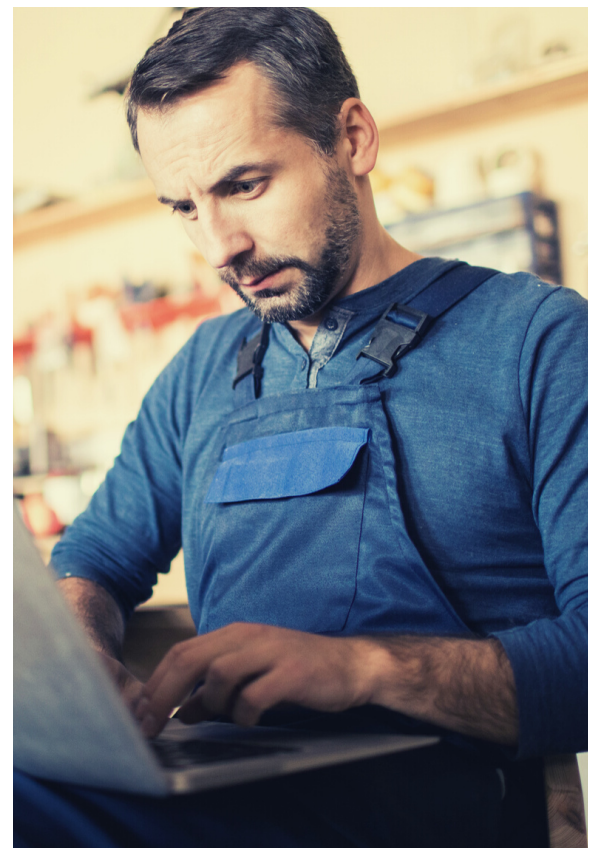
# SPOTLIGHT:

## MANAGING RECOVERY THROUGH RESILIENCY

As communities across central and eastern Alberta undergo an economic shift away from coal-fired power generation, many are experiencing a profound impact. In response, the Community Futures program in Alberta mobilized to help bring expertise in job transition and community resiliency to those on the front lines.

Community Futures programs in Meridian Region, Capital Region, East Parkland and East Central Alberta joined forces to address this significant change in the Alberta economy. The two-year initiative, funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada, is designed to assist communities as they transition away from employment centered around coal-fired power generation.

Modeled off other successful disaster-recovery programs in Alberta, this targeted program is focused on deploying skilled local coordinators and coaches to connect with regional governments and development agencies to identify workers who are interested in transitioning into self-employment. It also provides coaching and training for existing businesses impacted by the economic shifts in their communities.



**A joint project of Community Futures:**

**Meridian Region**

**Capital Region**

**East Parkland**

**East Central Alberta**



CFNA serves as project management for this initiative within the Canada Coal Transition Initiative.



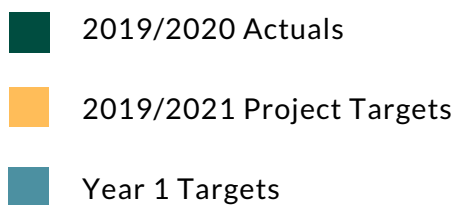
# 249

Participants trained in  
2019/20



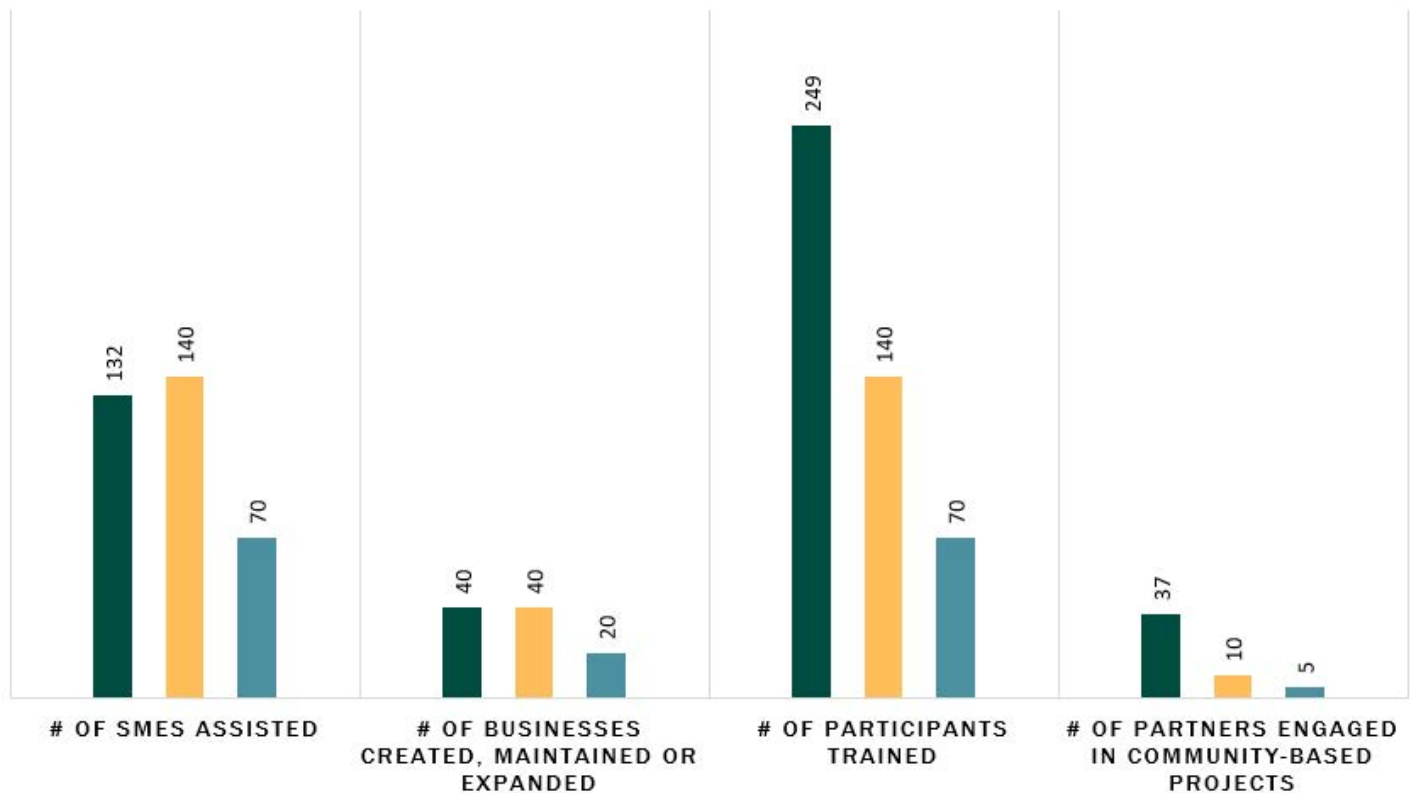


# COMMUNITY RESILIENCY AND OPPORTUNITIES PROJECT (CROP)



## Project Performance Metrics

CROP is a 2-year project that ends in March 2021.







# People & Places

## Leading the Way

### "Working in a New Economic Reality" - Spring Training

34 delegates from 17 Alberta offices attended, this represented 63% attendance from member offices.

### 2019 Symposium & AGM - Grande Prairie, Alberta

91 delegates attended from across Alberta. 36 delegates participated in a half-day walking tour of local Main Street businesses. Guests used event vouchers to dine at local restaurants and shop at some of the businesses located in the downtown area.



## 2019 Awards

- Ev Arlidge Unsung Hero – **Corinna Kunz**, CF Highwood
- Knight-Swan for Outstanding Leadership – **Patti-Jay Powell**, CF Centre West
- Excellence & Innovation – **CF Tawatinaw** for the 'Youth Entrepreneurship Program'
- Mover & Shaker for Community Economic Development - **Jodie Eckhart**, CF Centre West\*
- Volunteer of the Year – **Steve Upham**, CF St. Paul-Smoky Lake
- EDP Advocacy – **CF Central Alberta**

*\*New award for 2019*

## Members Services

Group Benefits  
Group RSP program  
D/O Liability Insurance  
Travel Insurance

Microsoft Office 365  
Bulletproof Support &  
Exchange Server  
DocuSign



## Network Support

# 108

NUMBER OF COMMUNITY FUTURES EMPLOYEES IN ALBERTA

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



# PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

## ENTREPRENEURS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM

46

Clients Served  
EDP 2019/20

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, many who have entrepreneurial and/or Community Futures experience, the program 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.

The program supported 46 self-management clients in training and/or coaching and funded 4 special projects for marketing and training initiatives developed by Community Futures offices. Of the 46 clients served, 21 are women, 5 are Indigenous and 11 clients became loan clients. The program was delivered in 11 Alberta Community Futures offices and a total of 368 business services were provided.

## BUILDING A DIGITAL NETWORK

In 2019, the CFNA Board of Directors began transitioning to cloud-based solutions, using online tools, collaboration technology and virtual meetings.

Over 2019, a growing number of Community Futures organizations in Alberta began the process of adapting their operations and administration to remote and online environments.





# PROGRAMS & PROJECTS CONT.

## BEST PRACTICE SHARING

The Alberta network experienced a shift in local leadership teams. In partnership with the association, a member-led committee developed a library of management best practice documents and resources in:

- Lending
- Reporting
- Human Resources
- Community Economic Development
- Business Planning

The resources were developed to leverage internal capacity and enhance knowledge-transfer within the network.

# 32%

Growth of the CF Alberta Members' Hub website increased from 92 to 121 users. This online resource provides members and volunteers quick access to a growing library of shared policies, templates and network news.



## CYBERSECURITY POLICY

Cybercrime is a multifaceted, increasingly prevalent and elaborate. In a proactive response, Community Futures Alberta continued to partner with the Community Futures Pan West network and others in developing ongoing Best Practices and Policy.

Each regional Community Futures organization was encouraged to begin assessing their compliance with recommendations to ensure they protect themselves, their leaders and their clients.





## Community Futures Lending and Investment Pool (CFLIP)

**-1.20%**

2019/20 ANNUAL RATE OF RETURN (3-YEAR AVERAGE IS 1.7%)

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.

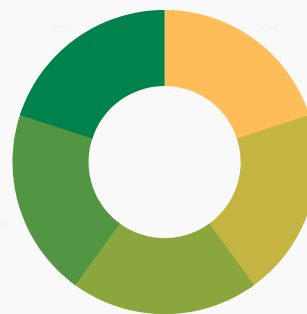
### Investment Review

In 2019, the CFNA Board of Directors initiated a review of the Community Futures Lending and Investment Pool (CFLIP) by the consulting and insurance brokerage firm Arthur J. Gallagher (Canada).

An Investment Strategy and Fund Management Review was conducted. Three areas of guidance were made to the overall strategy and portfolio management, these have been recognized by the CFNA Board of Directors and Fiera Capital.



## Audited Financial Statements



**[View here](#)**