

Performance Results for 2021-22 Community Futures Highwood

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)	59
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	431
4. Total number of business advisory services	512
<i>Rural access to capital and leveraged capital</i>	
5. Dollar value of loans	\$882,952
6. Total number of loans	20
7. Number of jobs created/maintained/expanded through lending ¹	28
<p>CFH spearheaded two large projects, applying for and receiving funding through the Rural Opportunities Fund. The Business Resilience and Retention (BRAR) project wrapped up in April 2021 (project end date was March 31, 2021) and the project ended very successful, exceeding all its KPIs. The Succession Planning and Matching (SMP) project continued to run and was very successful as well.</p> <p>The Succession Matching project was created to raise awareness, educate and eventually assist business owners in the sale of their business and was put in place to address the increasing issue of business closures in the rural areas. We received approval for this project in February of 2020 and were able to start the project with a slight delay due to COVID in the summer of 2020. We partnered with 7 other CF offices, as well as 3 external vendors who focus on family transitions, commercial sales and provide a business buy/sell platform respectively. The project has been delivered entirely online and was able to reach a large amount of people as a result.</p> <p>We were able to receive support from most of our shareholder regions for an expanded SMARTstart program, which will continue to be led by our CED Coordinator. We decided to delay the rollout of the project, with a current registration deadline of September 25, 2022, and a program start date of October 19, 2022.</p> <p>We also successfully applied for the DSS Grant through Business Link, which is part of the Digital Economy Program rolled out by the Province of Alberta. Through this program we provide free digital assessments to the entrepreneurs in our region as well as connect them with Google My Business for a free e-commerce website, if appropriate. We were able to hire another full-time staff member for this project to serve our clients better.</p>	

¹ Estimated at the time of lending