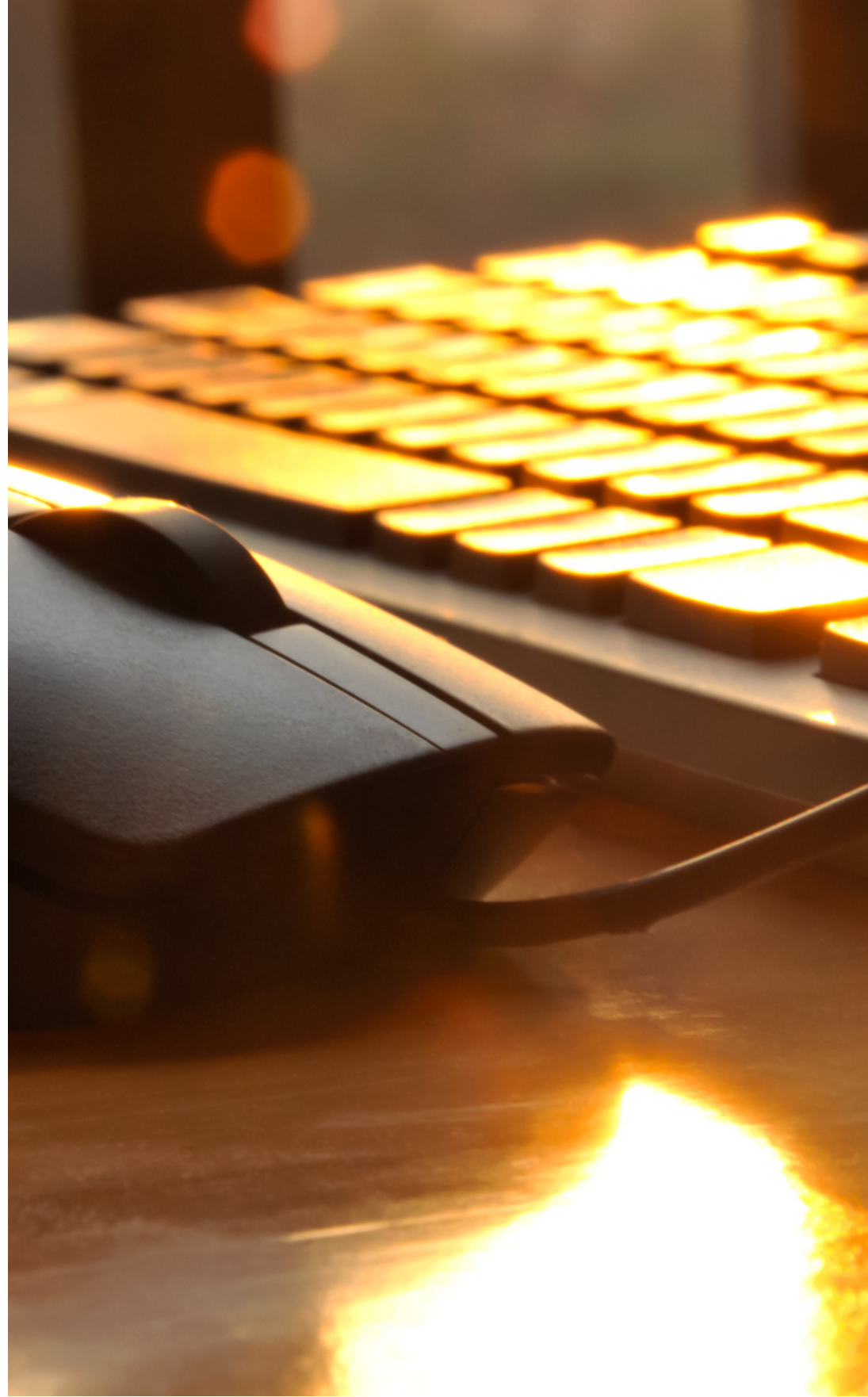


# ANNUAL REPORT

COMMUNITY FUTURES  
NETWORK OF ALBERTA  
2020-2021



# 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 2020/21

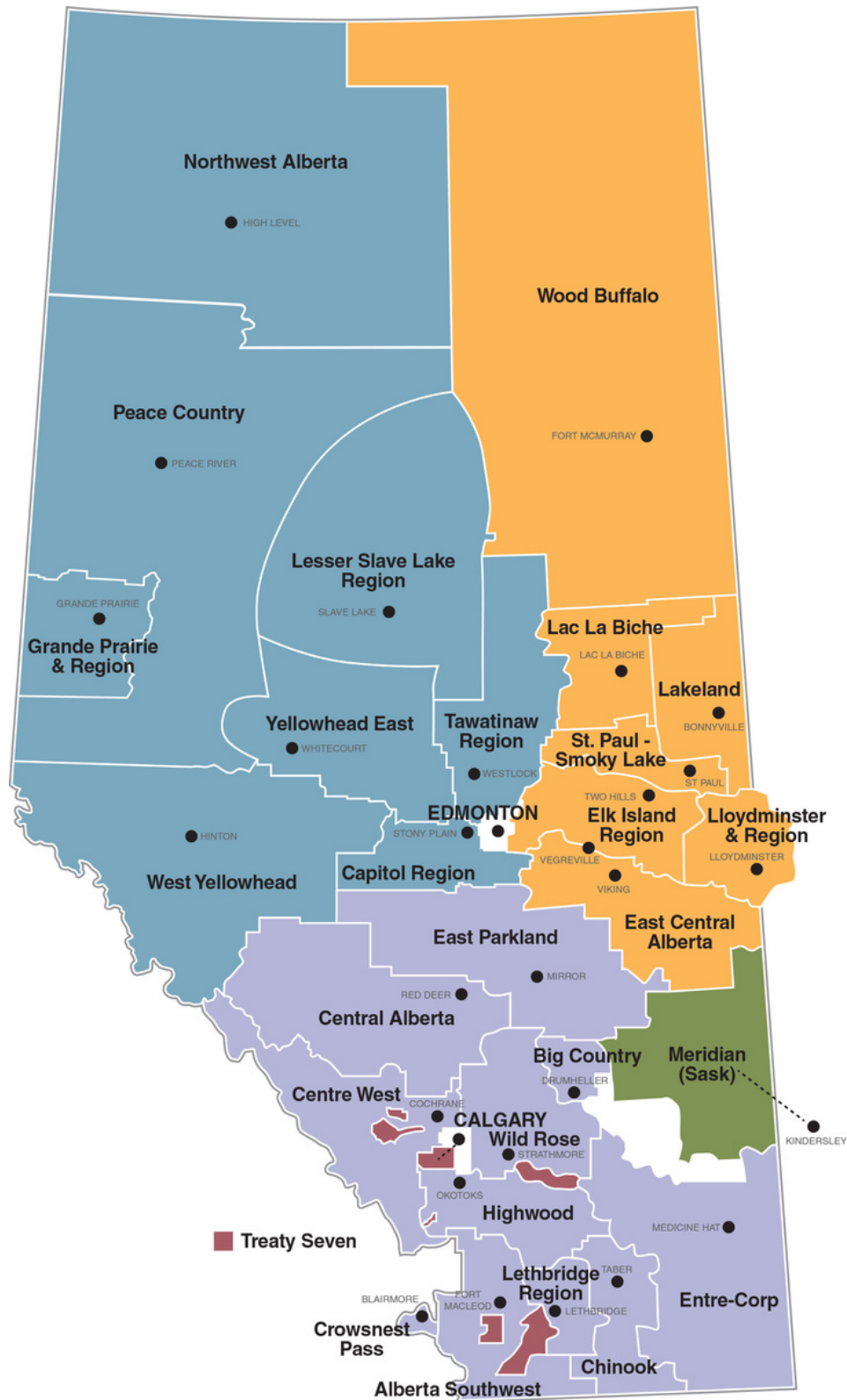
- **Chair, John Husch**  
Volunteer, South Region, CF Crowsnest Pass
- **Vice-Chair, Vanessa Simonin**  
Volunteer, North West Region, CF Capital Region
- **Treasurer, Wayne Schultz**  
Volunteer, South Region, CF Highwood
  
- **Director, Warren Toews**  
Volunteer, North West Region, CF Grande Prairie & Region
- **Director, Ben Fadeyi**  
Volunteer, North East Region, CF Lakeland
- **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, Nancy Robbins**  
Manager, North West Region, CF West Yellowhead
- **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:

- Lloyd Kearl - Volunteer, CF Alberta Southwest
- Matthew Creighton - Volunteer, CF Wood Buffalo
- Kelly Kierluk - CF Central Alberta
- David Petrovich - CF Wild Rose

# ALBERTA NETWORK

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







# NETWORK IMPACT

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

**10,597**

**CLIENTS SERVED**

**\$85M \***

**VALUE OF CLIENT LOANS**

**6421 \***

**JOBS CREATED / MAINTAINED /  
EXPANDED**

**250**

**NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS**

**957**

**NUMBER OF COMMUNITY-BASED  
PROJECTS**

\*Includes Regional Relief and Recovery Fund results up to  
March 31, 2021





# Message from the Chair

This past year has seen unprecedented hardship for small and medium-sized businesses across the province and across the country. Businesses have been forced to temporarily close or live within restrictions that resulted in significantly reduced revenues, staff layoffs, and some have even been forced to close their businesses forever.

## Year in Review

In 2020, the Federal Government approached the Community Futures Network of Alberta (CFNA) to deliver the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF). This fund was targeted at small and medium-sized businesses to assist them with partially forgivable, interest-free loans. The network members took up the challenge and in a very short period, and in an extremely safe and efficient manner, began to process applications and get money flowing into rural and remote businesses.

The delivery of the program by the network and its members showcased the strength and experience that exists, something we should all be proud of! During the first year of the program, we were able to complete over 2400 loans totaling over \$72 million dollars.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of the Government of Canada, and their confidence in our organization to advance the importance of rural economic development through small business growth.

## The Year Ahead

The future will see the staff and the board of the CFNA continuing to focus on the 3-year strategy based on the pillars of:

- Relationships
- Innovation
- Service
- Growth

The events of the last 18 months have taught us the world as we knew it has changed. Based on our solid foundation we must learn our client's needs more than ever and quickly adapt to align our services to meet them.

The delivery of the RRRF program is proving to be a springboard that we can utilize to not only deliver more, different, and better services, but cemented our brand at all levels of government.



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







## Message from the Executive Director

Allow me to start my message with a thank you.

Thank you to the CFNA staff for standing strong and ready through a year of change, fear, uncertainty and at times a pace that was difficult for everyone to keep up with.

Thank you to the Community Futures offices throughout the province for staying the course and providing the supports and resources our small businesses so desperately needed.

Thank you to my Board of Directors for the advice, encouragement, support and hours of time to help guide us through this uncharted territory.

Thank you to the Government of Canada and our regional development partners for providing the financial resources that allowed us to truly assist rural communities in their time of need.

While there were many challenges in this past year, there were certainly opportunities for growth as well. The number of clients assisted through the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund was unprecedented and has allowed us to showcase the Community Futures program to an entirely new segment of clients that might not have otherwise sought out our services.

Having the Community Futures program recognized by the Prime Minister as the delivery agents of the RRRF nationwide, speaks volumes to the trust we have earned with local small businesses and within our rural communities.

Exciting times are ahead. While we are still in the midst of a global pandemic, I know that the Community Futures organizations here in Alberta will continue to provide stability, resources, guidance and financial assistance to the thousands of small businesses that are the backbone of this province. I look forward to whatever challenges the next year brings and remember...

***"When you have exhausted all possibilities, remember this: you haven't."***

- Thomas A. Edison, Inventor and entrepreneur

Phyllis Maki - Executive Director  
Community Futures Network of Alberta



# SPOTLIGHT:

## REGIONAL RELIEF AND RECOVERY IN ALBERTA

During one of the most significant challenges in our program's history, the Community Futures network was there to make a difference.

Faced with a global health crisis, teams from across the province connected with thousands of small business owners - And the voice of advocacy for their survival was heard.

Understanding the pressures small businesses were facing, Community Futures quickly became experts in deploying a federal government relief program, the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund. The funding was directed towards 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.

Small and medium-sized businesses were able to apply through their local Community Futures location for federal relief and recovery loans that offered flexible terms and repayment options.

With expertise and empathy, rural and remote teams provided support and guidance helping local businesses diversify and adapt to ever-changing economic conditions.

The Community Futures program in Alberta is grateful to have played a part in helping rural and remote businesses, and local communities, traverse uncertainty and challenges - and offered hope when it was needed most.



Alberta RRRF Community Futures stream up to March 31, 2021



**Disbursed \$72 million in loans**



**Approved 2400+ applications**



**Helped maintain 5800+ jobs**

The Community Futures Network of Alberta serves as project management for this initiative within the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan.

“

Understanding the pressures small businesses were facing, Community Futures quickly became experts in deploying a government relief program.







## RELIEF FOR RURAL AND REMOTE BUSINESSES

### Jasper Event Management (JEM)

Jasper Event Management is a locally operated destination management and event planning company owned by Jordan Tucker in Jasper National Park. During the pandemic, Jordan and his team had to cancel or postpone many scheduled events and activities. However, with the help of the Alberta Community & Co-operative Association and Community Futures West Yellowhead, Jasper Event Management led local wedding operators to create My Jasper Wedding - a co-operative that collectively markets Jasper as a wedding destination. The Regional Relief and Recovery Fund assisted in keeping the business open and helped them change their focus to a co-operative model that uses collaborative marketing to assist all related businesses in the industry and Jasper area.



### The Picture Butte Hotel and Bar & The Telegraph Taphouse

In early 2020, Ram and Olga Khanal already owned both The Picture Butte Hotel and Bar and The Telegraph Taphouse and had their sights on the newly vacant Water Tower. Following their instincts, they purchased the space, and once again, experienced success in the first couple of months after opening. Then COVID-19 hit and sent the world spiralling. Because Ram and Olga's third business did not exist before 2020, they were not eligible for most government small business aid. However, through Community Futures Lethbridge Region, they were able to secure the relief funding needed to make it through the worst of the lockdowns and find success on the other side.

### Inner Powered Leaders

During the COVID-19 pandemic, business owner Kim Dechaine had to shift her in-person presentations and coaching to a virtual environment. This was a completely new direction and involved learning how to offer presentations, services, financial transactions, marketing, and registration processing online. The relief funding from Community Futures Lakeland allowed her to hire technology support and since then, has created new online courses and is looking to expand her virtual business.

## REGIONAL RELIEF AND RECOVERY FUND

“

*Having a regional partner who supports Alberta small businesses has made it possible for us to keep going during this period of uncertainty. We are grateful for the funding support. Thank you!*

*Alberta Community Futures RRRF client*



# LEADERSHIP

## 2020 Awards

### Ev Arlidge Unsung Hero Award

Sheri Breen, CF Grande Prairie and Region

### Knight-Swan for Outstanding Leadership Award

Sean Blewett, CF Entre-Corp & CF Chinook

### Volunteer of the Year Award

Ron Fox, CF Lakeland

### Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program Advocacy Award

CF Central Alberta



## Members Services

Group Benefits

Group RSP program

D/O Liability Insurance

Travel Insurance

Microsoft 365

Bulletproof Support &

Exchange Server

DocuSign



## Network Support

# 118

NUMBER OF COMMUNITY FUTURES EMPLOYEES IN ALBERTA

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



# BUILDING A MORE CONNECTED NETWORK

## Business Continuity & COVID-19

In the early days of the pandemic, CFNA quickly responded to the dramatic shifts in network needs. Crisis communication methods and tools were developed to ensure Alberta members had access to public health updates, operational resources, small business support programs, partner information and human resources support.

## Moving Connection Online

Network investments in technology enabled CF office teams to transition to working remotely and continue serving their clients and communities in safe and healthy ways.

CFNA also facilitated weekly virtual meetings with network members - providing an ongoing forum for pandemic response, program information, team support and best practice sharing.

## Mental Wellness

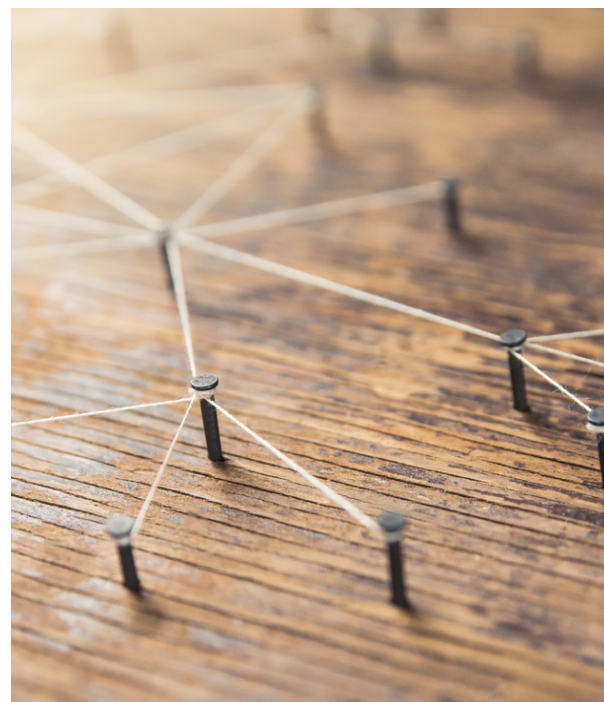
Along with physical health and safety, CFNA helped address mental health for employees and clients with a series of webinars on topics including Self-Care & Stress Management, the Power of Language and Stigma, Supportive Management, Mental Wellness, and Fostering Resiliency.

## Partnering for Purpose

Collaborating with other small business champions expanded the Community Futures' program impact and reach.

We are proud to have partnered with:

- Alberta Chambers of Commerce
- Alberta Community & Co-operative Association
- Alberta Mentorship Program
- Alberta Women Entrepreneurs
- Business Link
- Community Futures Network of Canada
- Community Futures Pan West Network (Rural Opportunities Fund & Marketing Pilot Project)
- Economic Developers Alberta
- Women's Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub
- Women Entrepreneurs-in-STEM (WESTEM)





# ADVOCACY

## ENTREPRENEURS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM

# 48

Clients Served  
EDP 2020/21

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.

The program supported 48 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 48 clients served, 23 were women, 6 were Indigenous and 10 clients were referred for a loan. The program was delivered in 13 Alberta Community Futures offices and a total of 384 business services were provided.

### Additional Funding Support in 2020/21

This year, the program received additional funding to help mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on small business and entrepreneurs with disabilities. An impact survey was used to focus in on evolving client and program needs. Additional funding in 2020/21 was used to develop:

- Online meeting capabilities for program coaches and clients.
- Front-line Mental Wellness training.
- EDP client social media/marketing coaching and support.
- Development of an Alberta EDP program website and online business resources and tools.
- Procurement of reusable masks and hand sanitizer for Alberta CF offices.
- Seven additional pandemic-focused special projects including, mental wellness resources and customized training, partnership and event sponsorships, entrepreneurship boot-camp engagement and participation.



Guidance. Support. Community.

## Your pathway to business success begins here.

Business loans, tools, mentoring, guidance, and support for rural small business owners and entrepreneurs in Alberta.

# STEWARDSHIP

## TRANSFORMING TECHNOLOGY

In early 2021, work began to redevelop Community Futures websites increasing centralized security, privacy compliance and industry-standard best practices.

This shared-value initiative will address how exponential advances in data and technology are shaping communities, and will enable Community Futures to serve clients in new ways.

### CF Alberta Shared Website Project includes:

- Framework agreements for all participating members, developing an innovative business model for shared technology use and oversight.
- Best practices for website privacy and updates to shared policies and procedures.
- Industry-standard security features and response protocols.
- Capacity-building to upgrade technology and digital marketing knowledge applications and skills.

“

This shared-value initiative will address how exponential advances in data and technology are shaping communities, and will enable Community Futures to serve clients in new ways.

## INNOVATION AND GROWTH



Delivery of the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund enabled CFNA to advance the program's public profile, media relations, stakeholder outreach and communication support across Alberta and Western Canada.



Upgrades to shared technology systems have also created opportunities for leadership and compliance in network privacy and information security practices. CFNA has taken steps to keep pace with increasing shifts in technology and Albertans' expectations of how programs like Community Futures use, share and store their personal information.



Adoption of the CF Alberta Cyber Security Policy and Best Practices, played a key role in the development of a larger Western Cyber Security Project for Community Futures organizations across B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and a series of online security training provided through the Community Futures Pan West Network.



## Community Futures Lending and Investment Pool (CFLIP)

# 13.4%

FISCAL 2020/21 TOTAL PORTFOLIO PERCENTAGE RETURN

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.

 [View here](#)

## CFNA Audited Financial Statements



 [View here](#)