

ANNUAL REPORT

COMMUNITY FUTURES NORTH FRASER



2025-26



NORTHFRASER.ORG

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Community Futures North Fraser continues to play an important role in supporting entrepreneurs, strengthening local businesses, and contributing to the long-term economic wellness of our region. Over the past year, we have continued to see resilience, innovation, and growth throughout Mission, Kent/Agassiz, Harrison Hot Springs, and the surrounding communities we proudly serve.

This year, we provided 1,094 business advisory services, supported 422 participants through business training sessions, and disbursed more than \$1.2 million in loans to eight local businesses. Through our lending, advisory, and community development efforts, we helped support the creation of 69 jobs across the region. These numbers represent more than statistics, they reflect entrepreneurs pursuing opportunities, businesses expanding, and communities building stronger local economies together.

Community collaboration remained a key focus throughout the year. We were proud to support initiatives that encouraged workforce development, tourism, environmental stewardship, cultural connection, and community inclusion. Projects such as the MSS Forklift Project, the Silverdale Creek Wetlands Audio Walk, Mission TEDx, and several seasonal community events all contributed to strengthening both the economic and social fabric of the North Fraser region.

We also continued to see meaningful impact through the Self-Employment Program and the MyCommunityFuturesBC.ca platform, both of which provide entrepreneurs with practical tools, mentorship, training, and support as they launch and grow their businesses. The success stories highlighted throughout this report demonstrate the determination and creativity of local entrepreneurs and reinforce the importance of accessible business support services in rural communities.

This work would not be possible without the dedication of our volunteer Board of Directors, committee members, staff, and community partners. Together, they contributed more than 732 volunteer hours this year, helping guide our organization with professionalism, insight, and a shared commitment to community success.

As we look ahead, Community Futures North Fraser is preparing for an exciting new chapter. We are looking forward to our upcoming strategic planning session and the opportunity to shape our priorities and direction for the next three years. We have ambitious plans for our region and remain committed to expanding partnerships, supporting entrepreneurship, and creating meaningful economic impact throughout our communities.



Janessa Derksen, Chair



**Gwen Schmidt,
Executive Director**



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Marketing Coordinator



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Program Director

OUR VOLUNTEERS

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Mission City Councillor Liaison

Mark Schweinbenz

Village of Harrison Councillor Liaison

Duane Post

District of Kent Councillor Liaison

Cory Cassel

Fraser Valley Regional District Liaison

Mel Waardenburg

Fraser Valley Regional District Liaison

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Tabitha Ewert

COMMUNITY IMPACT

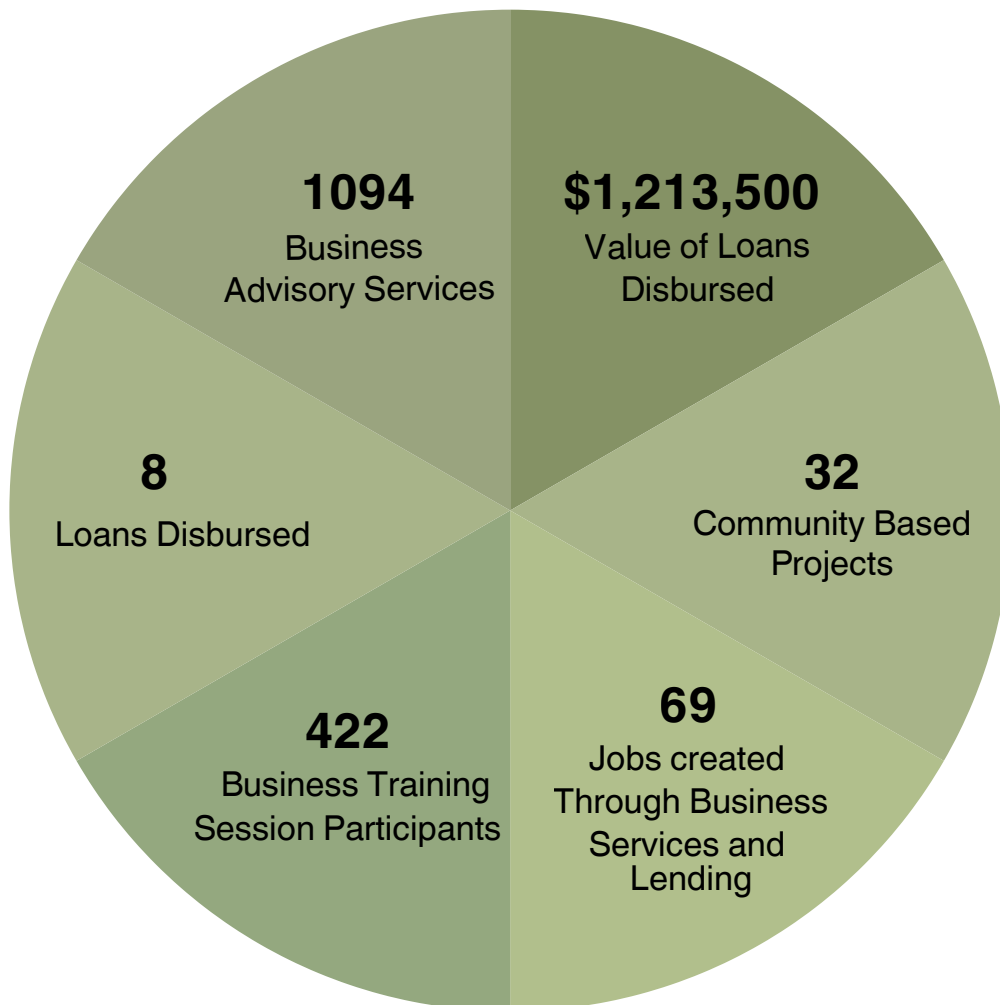
This year, Community Futures North Fraser continued to strengthen and support the communities of Mission, Kent/Agassiz, Harrison Mills, Deroche, Dewdney, and Harrison Hot Springs through collaboration, leadership, and community-driven economic development.

More than just a lender, we are a dedicated partner to local businesses and entrepreneurs, providing flexible financing, business advisory services, and opportunities that help small and medium-sized businesses grow and succeed. Our work is focused on building a resilient local economy, encouraging diversification, and creating long-term community impact.

None of this would be possible without the commitment of our volunteers, board members, and committee participants. Their passion, expertise, and countless hours of service helped drive initiatives, strengthen partnerships, and support businesses across the region this year.

Together, we are creating vibrant communities, empowering local businesses, and building a strong future for the North Fraser region.

INVESTMENT IN OUR COMMUNITY



MARKETING INITIATIVES

Community Futures North Fraser: Supporting Growth and Community Well-Being



This year, Community Futures North Fraser supported a diverse mix of cultural, educational, environmental, and social initiatives. Funding for the MSS Forklift Project helped expand access to hands-on forklift training for students in the Mission School District Work Experience program, supporting entry-level employment opportunities and workplace readiness. Seasonal events such as Winter Night Lights in the District of Kent, Lights by the Lake in Harrison Hot Springs, and Centennial Lights in the City of Mission contributed to increased tourism, community engagement, and local business activity during the winter months.



Environmental and cultural initiatives were also a key focus. The Silverdale Creek Wetlands Audio Walk introduced an interactive experience that combines Indigenous storytelling, environmental education, and technology, while the Wayfinder Sign Project enhanced placemaking through an artist-designed map connecting residents and visitors to important cultural and natural sites. Both projects emphasized Indigenous collaboration and long-term community value.



Support for community connection and knowledge-sharing was reflected through contributions to Mission TEDx, which brought together local speakers and community members to explore ideas around innovation and leadership, the Deroche Community Fair, which brought residents and visitors together through family-friendly activities, local entertainment, agricultural displays, and community celebration in the North Fraser region. In addition, seasonal contributions to Central Community Church and Agassiz Harrison Community Services supported food bank initiatives, providing essential assistance to individuals and families during the holiday season.

These investments contributed to strengthening the economic and social fabric of the region by supporting tourism, workforce development, cultural expression, environmental awareness, and direct community support.



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SUCCESS STORY

Rep-Air Heating and Cooling

Rep-Air Heating & Cooling: Built on Trust, Grown Through Community

Rep-Air Heating & Cooling didn't start as a large company with a big team; it started with a simple idea: Do good work, treat people right, and build something the community can rely on.

From the beginning, Justin has focused on more than just heating and cooling systems. He focused on the experience homeowners have when they invite someone into their home, making sure every interaction felt honest, respectful, and straightforward.

In an industry where many homeowners expect pressure or confusion, Rep-Air took a different approach. Conversations are clear, options are explained, and people are given the space to make the right decision for their home and their budget.

That approach has led to steady growth.

What started as a small operation has grown into a trusted local team serving homeowners across Mission, Maple Ridge, Abbotsford, Langley, and surrounding areas. Much of that growth has come from word of mouth, neighbours recommending Rep-Air to neighbours, families sharing their experiences, and a reputation built one home at a time.

Along the way, Community Futures has been a part of that journey. Their guidance and support have helped Rep-Air navigate the realities of growing a small business, and that kind of local resource makes a real difference for companies like ours that are committed to staying rooted in the community they serve.

Rep-Air has also helped homeowners take advantage of programs like CleanBC and FortisBC rebate programs, guiding them through the process and making energy-efficient upgrades more accessible. For many families, this has meant improving their comfort while reducing long-term costs, something that might not have felt possible otherwise. As the company has grown, one thing hasn't changed: their connection to the community.

Rep-Air continues to show up at local events, support community initiatives, and stay involved in the areas they serve. Because for them, success isn't just about growth, it's about being a company people recognize, trust, and feel comfortable calling when they need help. Today, Rep-Air Heating & Cooling continues to build on that foundation, one home, one conversation, and one relationship at a time.



SUCCESS STORY

The Fitness Lab

Growing the Fitness Family: The Fitness Lab Expands in Mission

For many people, a gym is simply a place to work out. For the clients of The Fitness Lab, it's something much more; it's a community. Owners Vik Gill and Jereymi Longpre have built a fitness environment that prioritizes inclusion, encouragement, and connection. Their approach has created a space where people feel welcomed from the moment they walk through the door, a place where progress is celebrated, friendships are built, and everyone feels part of the family.

Originally founded by Vik Gill, The Fitness Lab has grown steadily over the years, developing a reputation in Mission for its supportive group training environment and personalized approach to fitness. As more people discovered the studio and the strong sense of community it offers, the membership continued to grow.

With that growth came a new challenge: the space that had supported the gym's early success was no longer large enough to keep up with demand.

With support from Community Futures North Fraser, Vik and Jereymi have now expanded into a new facility that is more than double the size of their previous location. The larger space allows them to expand programming, welcome more members, and continue building the inclusive fitness community they have worked hard to create.

In addition to co-owning The Fitness Lab, Jereymi also operates UpNorth Athletics, a training and nutrition coaching business focused on helping clients build sustainable habits and long-term success.

This expansion marks an important step forward for the business. As The Fitness Lab continues to grow, Vik and Jereymi remain focused on what made it successful in the first place, creating a space where people feel supported, motivated, and proud to be part of a community.



S.E.P

SELF-EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SEP)

The Self-Employment Program (SEP) continues to support aspiring entrepreneurs in building viable businesses and creating meaningful employment opportunities for themselves. Designed for individuals transitioning from unemployment or underemployment, the program provides one-on-one coaching, practical tools, and ongoing mentorship throughout the business start-up process.

During 2025–26, Community Futures North Fraser supported 15 clients at various stages of business planning and development. Participants worked on developing business plans, refining their ideas, and building the skills needed to move toward sustainable self-employment. The program maintained strong engagement, with many clients actively progressing toward launching and growing their businesses.

Overall, SEP remains an important pathway for individuals to explore entrepreneurship, strengthen their business capacity, and contribute to local economic growth through new and emerging small businesses.



The Organized Soul

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Kelle had a passion for helping busy families bring order and calm into their homes but needed the support and structure to turn that passion into a business. Through the Self-Employment Program (SEP), she was able to focus on building The Organized Soul, a home organizing service based in Mission, BC that helps families transform clutter into calm with done-for-you solutions. The financial support provided stability during the startup phase, while the built-in accountability and ongoing guidance helped Kelle stay on track and push through moments of uncertainty. With access to experienced mentors and a strong support network, she gained the confidence and clarity needed to move forward. Today, Kelle is helping families create functional, peaceful spaces making everyday life more manageable, one home at a time.

AbbyBubba Pet Care

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Over the past two years, Sarah has grown AbbyBubba Pet Care from a strong idea into a steady, community-rooted business built on trust, consistency, and thoughtful support for sensitive pets and conscientious pet parents. She was drawn to the SEP because it offered structure, financial stability, accountability, and practical guidance she could build on.

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GIVING BACK

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our Board and Committee members for their unwavering dedication and volunteerism. Their commitment to our organization and the success of our clients is truly invaluable. This past year, we are proud to recognize an outstanding contribution of over 732 volunteer hours from our Board of Directors, Finance Committee, Loans and Investment Committee, and Business Plan Committee. Thank you for your remarkable service, time, and continued support.

VOLUNTEER HOURS





Strengthening Entrepreneurs

At Community Futures North Fraser, we continue to support the success of the **MyCommunityFuturesBC.ca** platform. Over the 2025–26 fiscal year, the platform has provided clients with access to valuable tools, training, and support designed to foster business growth and strengthen the regional economy.

Regional Impact and Engagement

Over the past year, engagement across the North Fraser region has remained strong:

- **72 active users**, representing a 100% engagement rate among our platform clients.
- **51.4%** of users identified as women, with participation from underrepresented groups, including **Indigenous (4.2%), Disabled (15.3%), Youth (4.2%), and LGBTQIA2S+ (9.7%)** entrepreneurs.

This platform continues to offer an accessible and inclusive space where entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds can connect with resources tailored to their needs and goals.

Training & Workshops

The platform has played a key role in delivering essential training opportunities:

- **339 workshops sign-ups** across webinars, workshops, and on-demand sessions.
- **54.8%** of workshop participants were women, highlighting the platform's significant role in supporting female entrepreneurs.
- Webinar attendance showed promising engagement, with **42.8%** attending live sessions and an additional **13.3%** accessing the recording for flexible learning.

Business Resilience and Recovery Support

Businesses accessed critical recovery resources:

- **33** consulting engagements were completed
- Over **79 hours** of consulting time were delivered to local businesses

This support has helped strengthen the resilience of businesses across the region, enabling them to adapt and grow in a changing economic environment.

The continued success of **MyCommunityFuturesBC.ca** in the North Fraser region highlights the importance of accessible, targeted support for small businesses. As we build on this momentum, we remain committed to expanding the platform's reach and deepening its impact within the community.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2023-26

Our Mandate

We help entrepreneurs and businesses grow, start and succeed.

Our Vision

Our vision is economic wellness for businesses and communities in our region.

Our Guiding Principles

Integrity We act ethically, honestly, and responsibly in all our actions, without compromise.

Respect We treat each other and everyone who works with us with dignity and professionalism.

Equity and Inclusion We value all types of differences, backgrounds and lived experiences in the development of our organization so that people who come to us feel safe and empowered to succeed.

Transparency We are committed to earning trust and credibility through good governance, ongoing evaluation, and open, accurate sharing of information with our oversight bodies, community partners, clients, and the public.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



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