



MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

Community Futures Alberta Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program

For many years, Community Futures offices in Alberta have been delivering the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program (EDP). Funded by the federal government, the EDP was created to assist persons with a disability or ongoing medical condition to become self employed.

Community Futures nurtures rural diversification by working with communities, entrepreneurs, and businesses that want to grow and evolve. Assisting clients through the EDP is an integral part of ensuring that all entrepreneurs have the opportunity to contribute to Alberta's economy.

About Community Futures

Originally created in 1986, Community Futures (CF) is an economic development program funded in western Canada by Western Economic Diversification Canada. Community Futures offices are non-profit organizations guided by volunteer boards of directors and staffed with business professionals. Together, they are actively engaged in helping to develop and implement community-based economic development and diversification strategies.

Apart from the EDP, our core services include:



Small Business Loans: We offer eight different loan products, each designed to meet a particular business need.



Community Economic Development: We work alongside community leaders and other key stakeholders to develop a strategic vision for the future of our rural communities.

This initiative has been made possible by the financial support of the Government of Canada through the department of Western Economic Diversification Canada.

Growing communities one idea at a time.



Self Employment Program: This program (available only in some areas) provides business training and financial assistance to new entrepreneurs while they get their business up and running.



Rural Diversification Initiative: RDI provides funds to Community Futures organizations and their partners for economic diversification projects in Alberta.

The Community Futures Network of Alberta (CFNA) was created in 1995 to support the 27 individual Community Futures offices in the province.

Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program

The Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program provides Community Futures offices with enhanced support, so that they can assist clients in rural Alberta who have a disability or ongoing medical condition.

Available services include:

- > Business training, which may take the form of one-on-one business coaching or group workshops
- > Mentoring from Community Futures staff and business experts in the community
- > Affordable, flexible business loans:
 - To establish a new business
 - To purchase an existing business
 - To expand or upgrade an existing business

Repayable business loans are available from small amounts up to a maximum of \$150,000. Flexible repayment options are available, and are matched to the client's business and healthcare needs.

Program Criteria

To be eligible for the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities program, clients must:

- > Have a self-declared disability or ongoing medical condition
- > Live in rural Alberta
- > Have a viable business idea
- > Be able to contribute in some way to their business

Self employment can be an excellent way for persons with a disability or an ongoing medical condition to get back into the workforce. EDP clients find that the return to work through self employment is made more manageable through flexible hours, personalized work environments, and a sense of control over their own destiny.

For More Information

- > Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program: www.youcando.ca
- > Community Futures Network of Alberta: www.cfna.ca
- > Or, contact:
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