

Regional Workforce Development Study

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Community
Futures  Wild Rose

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Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

The labour market in the Community Future Wild Rose (CFWR) region is struggling with many of the same challenges as the labour market across Canada. While the region's issues are similar to the national challenges, regional context matters and some issues are unique to the region.

The economic analysis reveals that GDP growth in the region has been sluggish since 2015 as it struggled through the economic hardships in 2015 and 2020/2021. Agriculture and oil and gas are big sectors in the region which are expected to see a decrease in labour demand in the coming years. In contrast, construction is also one of the biggest sectors and is expected to only grow more in the coming years, demanding more general and skilled labour.

The labour market in the region currently faces a significant shortage of both general and skilled workers. Approximately 8 out of 10 jobs in the region are general and skilled labor, yet only 10% of the population possesses an apprenticeship or trades background, and 40% hold a college degree or higher. Consequently, the workforce is more educated than what the labour environment requires, resulting in a disparity between the supply of general and skilled labour and the demand for it.

Engagement was conducted in the form of interviews and surveys for business owners and residents. It captured a diverse range of views and provided qualitative data for the report. Employers, workers, and key stakeholders gave their perspectives on the local labour market and the challenges it faces. Questions asked revolved around challenges employers experience filling vacancies, issues workers experience in finding employment, what workers look for in employers, and what employers look for in workers.

The results highlight the necessity for a flexible strategy to ensure that labour issues are effectively tackled. This identifies specific themes, which are further detailed in the report:

- Fulfilling general labour needs: as there is a large deficit of general workers, the Rural Renewal Stream provides a good opportunity to complement labour supply.
- Fulfilling skilled labour needs: the deficit of skilled labour is a major constraint on the local economy. By addressing this challenge, the size of skilled labour work force can be increased to decrease the shortage.
- Available and affordable housing: analysis and engagement found that the costs of housing has risen in the region and the availability of it has decreased in the last decade. Creating both available and affordable housing will increase employers ability to attract and retain employees and it will enable the region's relatively young population to stay in the region.
- Training for smaller employers without access to HR resources: smaller employers face significant challenges in navigating the complexities of human resources (HR) management. Increasing business supports will help employers in their ability to attract and retain top talent.
- Stakeholder labour service engagement: a small percentage of people know about the services being offered to support both employers and workers in the region. Providing more exposure and further engagement will increase the impact of these services.
- Regional recruitment: to engage more people, public partners in the region can focus on increasing job fairs, work on changing the image of apprentice and trades jobs, and create a region employment portal.

The municipalities and public partners within the CFWR region play pivotal roles in tackling labour challenges. Given the complexity of the CFWR area, it's imperative to unite public partners, employers, and the community to effectively implement the recommended solutions outlined in this report. Leveraging the unique strengths and positions of each stakeholder will be instrumental in overcoming the labour market hurdles confronting the region.

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1. Introduction

1.1. BACKGROUND

Across Canada, businesses are struggling to find the labour force they need to be successful in a dynamic and competitive global economy, and the Community Futures Wild Rose region is no different. A confluence of labour challenges, some a generation in the making, some emerging unexpectedly from the pandemic, are pushing communities to find solutions to problems that are complex and intertwined.

From housing to labour force participation, inflation and demographic shifts, the challenges require broad community collaboration from the private, public, and non-profit sector. Fostering this kind of collaboration requires bold leadership that is firmly rooted in evidence-based decision making. Meanwhile, the CFWR region is poised for economic development and prosperity. The region has recently been successful in attracting major investments that will create economic opportunities for businesses and residents alike. Major recent investments include:

- Phyto Organix in Strathmore
- CGC Inc. (a state-of-the-art wallboard manufacturing plant) in Wheatland County
- De Havilland Aircraft Facility just outside of town in Wheatland County

These three major investments alone will create close to 3000 new jobs in the region in the next 5-10 years, significantly impacting the regional workforce. However, these developments could put strain on the labour market, making it even harder for existing businesses to find the talent they need to compete in the global economy. Working collaboratively and getting ahead of these challenges will allow the region to make the most of these opportunities and set the stage for long term growth and prosperity by planning for these developments.

In addition to these developments, the hospitality sector has been experiencing labour challenges and are utilizing programs such as the Temporary Foreign Worker programs and most recently have been considering the possible benefits of Alberta's Rural Renewal Stream with the municipalities. Because of insufficient labour data and a lack of understanding regarding employer and resident challenges, regional partners haven't determined whether the rural renewal stream would effectively address labour shortages.

Given these circumstances, the Project Partners set out to conduct a regional workforce development project. The objective of the project is twofold: to evaluate the economic labour dynamics within the region and to gain insights into the challenges faced by both employers and workers. By doing so, the regional partners aim to address present labour requirements and equip themselves to effectively meet future demands in the labour market.

1.2. REPORT OVERVIEW

This report provides detailed analysis and recommended solutions for CFWR partners. It offers a collective response to the CFWR region's current and anticipated labour market recruitment and retention needs.

Section 2 summarizes the current state of the region's economy and labour market, as well as GDP forecasts for the coming years. Its models build from data published by various public sources and localized data provided by project partners. It also provides more detailed analysis of key industries as they have a large impact on the economic wellbeing of the region. Data analysis on resident demographics and characteristics are also included to better understand the makeup of the region's labour supply.

Section 3 reviews engagement with both business owners/managers and labour market participants (i.e., the local workforce), highlighting key findings and feedback raised by participants through surveys, interviews, and a strategic planning workshop.

The final section of this report provides solutions that were derived from insights gathered through community engagement and secondary research. A brief examination of the thematic issues and the relevant solutions that can address these issues are provided. Thematic issues that were identified include:

- Fulfilling General Labour Needs
- Fulfilling Skilled Labour Needs
- Available and Affordable Housing
- Training for small employers without HR resources
- Stakeholder Labour Services Engagement
- Regional Recruitment

It is anticipated that this report, along with its recommended solutions, will serve to unify the region towards a shared objective. By doing so, it aims to create a strong environment to support economic growth.

2. Regional Macroeconomic and Labour Market Overview

The Community Features Wild Rose (CFWR) region comprises a vast area in Southern Alberta. It includes Kneehill County, Wheatland County, the eastern part of Rocky View County, the City of Chestermere and the Town of Strathmore.¹ When discussing counties in this chapter, all towns and villages within its borders are included under the counties banner (e.g. Trochu is included with Kneehill and Irricana with Rocky View (East)).

2.1. REGIONAL OVERVIEW

2.1.1. DEMOGRAPHICS

Section Insight

The CFWR region is aging at a faster pace than the province and Calgary but has a larger young population (<15 years) than these two areas.

The population in the CFWR region has steadily increased over the last 10 years from 67,072 in 2011 to 80,590 in 2021. Population growth is not spread proportionally over the region. The growth of Chestermere from 14,824 inhabitants in 2011 to 22,163 inhabitants in 2021 accounts for over half of the population growth of the CFWR region. The rest of the growth comes from Rocky View County and Strathmore, growing from a population of 19,617 and 12,305 in 2011 to 23,604 and 14,339 inhabitants in 2021, respectively. In comparison, nearby Calgary welcomed 209,951 new Calgarians from 2011 to 2021 and grew to 1,30 million inhabitants. The populations of Kneehill County and Wheatland County were steady over this same period.

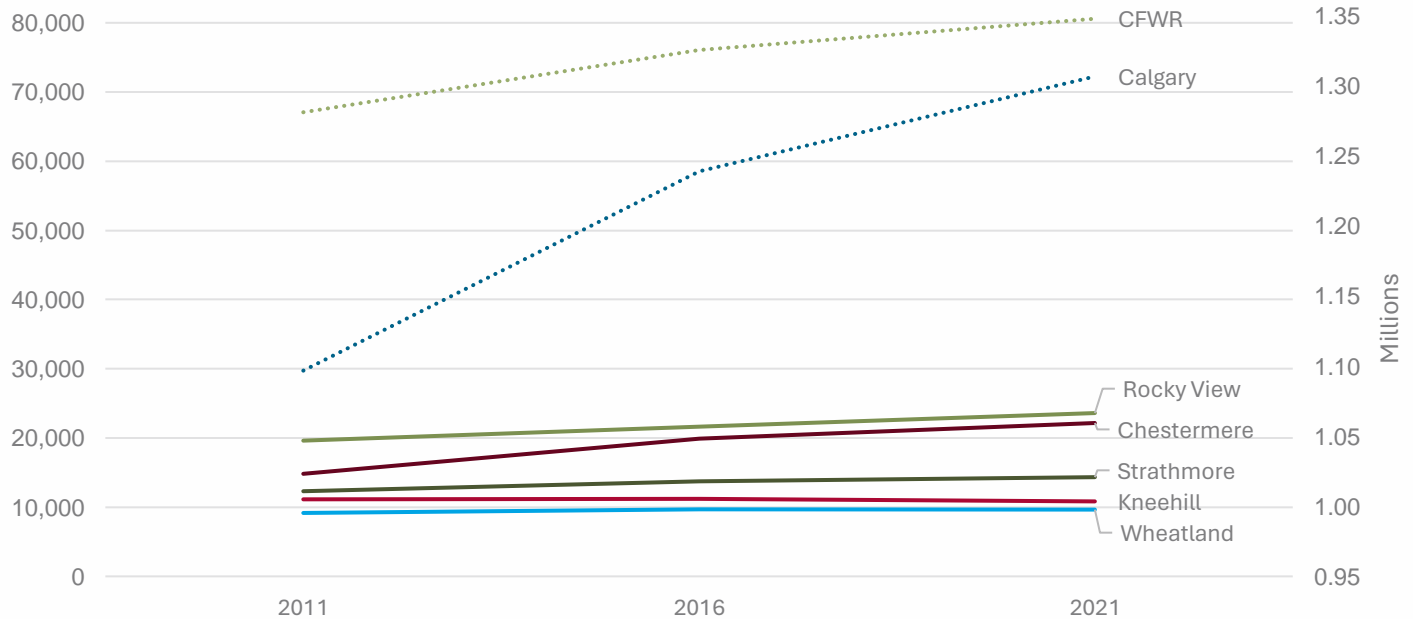


Figure 1: Population in the CFWR region and CFWR's municipalities (left axis) and Calgary (right axis)²

¹ When discussing Rocky View County in this chapter, it applies only to the eastern part of the County within the CFWR region unless otherwise noted.

² Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada.

Subsequently, population growth in the CFWR region was the strongest in Chestermere. The town's population grew an enormous 50% from 2011 to 2021. Other big growers were Rocky View County and Strathmore, growing at 20.3% and 16.5%. The CFWR region as a whole grew just over 20% in the 10 years between 2011 and 2021. This is very similar to the growth of Calgary, which grew 19.1% over the same period.

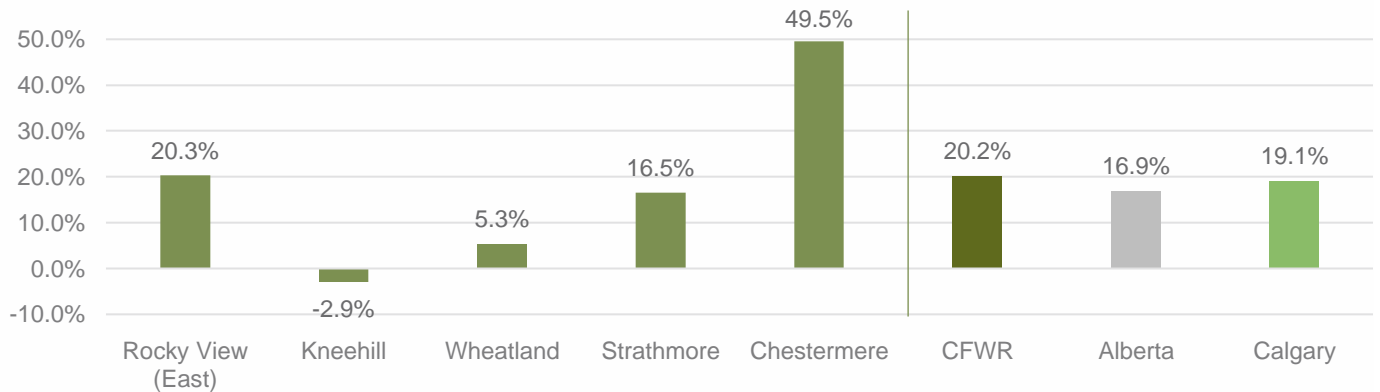


Figure 2: Population growth in the CFWR region and CFWR's municipalities, Alberta and Calgary (2011 to 2021)³

The population distribution of CFWR has shifted between 2011 and 2021. The share of people younger than 15 years decreased roughly 3% and the share of people aged 15 to 64 years decreased 3.5%. In contrast, the share of people older than 65 years increased a little over 5%. The CFWR region has a slightly smaller percentage of the population in the working age category of 15 to 64 years (64.5%) than Calgary (68.4%) and Alberta (66.2%). The region also has a higher share of the population aged 65 years and older than the province and Calgary. Overall, there is a clear trend that the population of CFWR is aging, and at a faster pace than the province and Calgary. Nevertheless, the CFWR region still has a larger proportion of people aged 14 years and younger than in the province and Calgary.

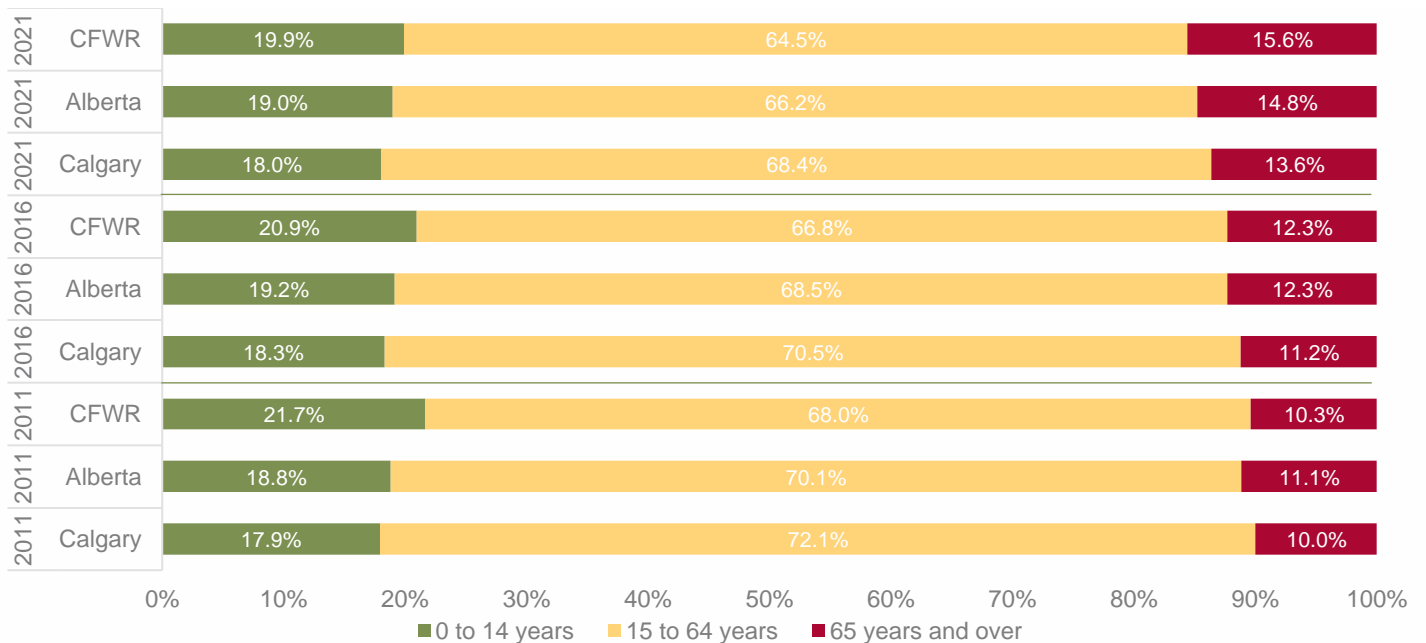


Figure 3: Age distribution in the CFWR region, Alberta and Calgary⁴

2.1.2. EDUCATION

³ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada.

⁴ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada.

Section Insight

The share of people with an apprenticeship, trade, college, or other non-university certificate or diploma in the CFWR region is small and not relevant for general skilled labour demands, but it has a relatively high share of people with no certificate and a high school diploma or equivalent. This provides the region with an opportunity to re-educate these people to the apprenticeship, trade, college, or other non-university certificate or diploma level.

Educational attainment in the CFWR region is substantially different than in Alberta and Calgary. 17% of the population aged 15 years and older in the CFWR region has no certificate, diploma, or degree. This is more than in Alberta and Calgary. The share of people with a high school (secondary) diploma or equivalency certificate is higher as well in the CFWR region than in Alberta and Calgary (32% versus 29% and 26%, respectively). In terms of postsecondary education, 51% of the population of the region has some postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree, compared to 56% in the province and 61% in Calgary. The postsecondary education category can be divided into four sub-categories.⁵ Within these sub-categories, an apprenticeship or trade certificate is held by 11% of the CFWR region. This is more than in Alberta (9%) and Calgary (6%). The region also has a larger share of the population with a college, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma than Alberta (18%) and Calgary (16%). Just 3% of the population has a university certificate or diploma below bachelor level in all three regions. 17% of the population has a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 26% in Alberta and 36% in Calgary.

With roughly 80% of the jobs classified as general or skilled labour and 20% as professional labour, the region does not have a problem with professional labour supply. As 17% of the population has a bachelor's degree or higher, there is a sufficient supply of residents that can fill the professional labour category. However, with 11% of the population having an apprenticeship or trades education and 22% having a college, CEGEP, or other non-university education, there is a very limited supply of general skilled labour.

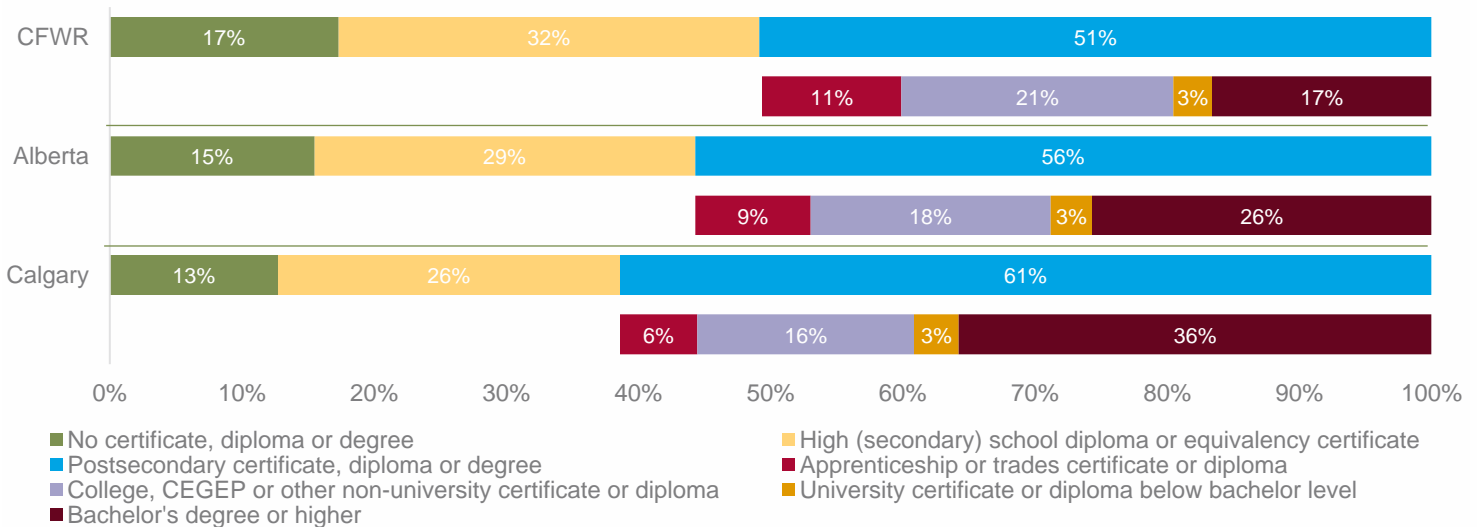


Figure 4: Educational attainment in the CFWR region and CFWR's municipalities, Calgary and Alberta⁶

2.2. MACROECONOMIC OVERVIEW

⁵ These categories are: Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma; College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma; University certificate or diploma below bachelor level; Bachelor's degree or higher

⁶ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada.

2.2.1. GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

Section Insights

- GDP growth in the region was mostly driven by strong growth of Chestermere and, to an extent, Rocky View (East), whereas Strathmore's, Wheatland's, and Kneehill's GDP only grew slightly.
- The region's GDP moves closer with Calgary's GDP than with Alberta's GDP.
- The biggest sectors in the region in terms of GDP are mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; agriculture, forestry, logging and support; construction; and real estate and leasing. Labour demand from the first two sectors will likely decrease in the future, whereas construction is already struggling to find workers.

Community Future Wild Rose (CFWR) is a wide and varied region. Ballard has estimated the GDP for the area, as well as for the municipalities serving as project partners (Rocky View County (East), Wheatland County, Kneehill County, Town of Strathmore, and the City of Chestermere).

GDP for these areas is plotted in Figure 5. GDP in the CFWR region was an estimated \$5.8 billion in December 2022. CFWR is a wide area and the difference between the town, city and counties are substantial. For instance, the eastern part of Rocky View County has a GDP of around \$1.79 billion as of December 2022. This is similar to the GDP of Chestermere on its own. The City of Chestermere saw strong economic growth since 2002. In 2002, the City had the lowest GDP of all municipalities but, by the end of 2022, Chestermere had a GDP of an estimated \$1.7 billion. It more than tripled since 2002 and is now just short of being the biggest economy in the CFWR region.

In contrast, Strathmore's GDP has grown roughly 65% since 2002. Strathmore's GDP has been relatively stationary since 2012 and has been moving around \$1 billion ever since. The smallest economies in the region are Kneehill and Wheatland Counties. Their GDP's totalled \$0.72 billion and \$0.66 billion in December 2022, respectively. Their economies have, as Strathmore's, been relatively stationary the last decade. Since 2007, their economies have shrunk significantly. In comparison, Calgary's GDP was \$95.9 billion and grew 36% since 2009. In Alberta, the GDP grew 22.5% and was \$331.5 billion in December 2022.

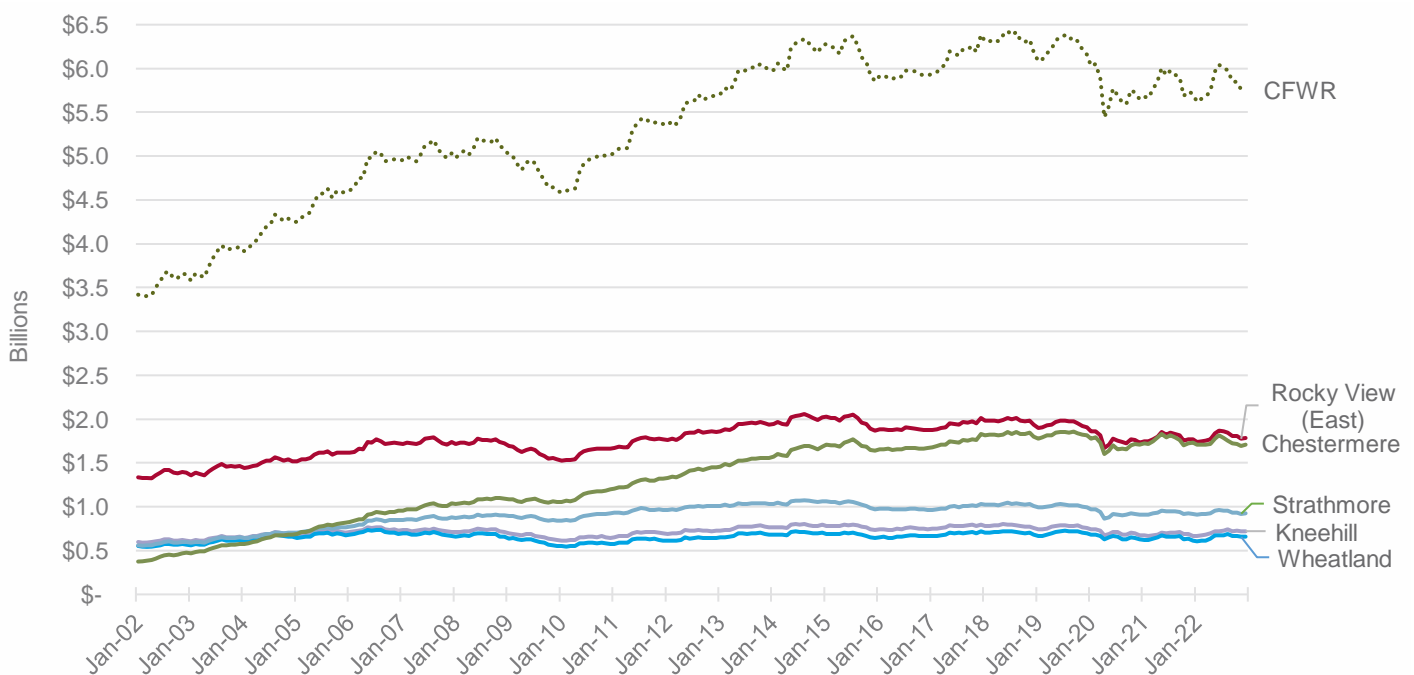


Figure 5: Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the CFWR region and CFWR's municipalities⁷

In terms of GDP growth, the CFWR region has closely followed the same pattern as Calgary and, to an extent, Alberta. There are clear drops in the GDP growth rate visible for the CFWR region, Alberta, and Calgary around 2008, 2014, and 2017–2020. In general, the CFWR region has not performed very differently in terms of GDP growth than Calgary over the last 20 years. There are slight differences in terms of growth with the province and it seems that the CFWR region moves closer with Calgary's economy than with the provincial economy.



Figure 6: Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate in the CFWR region, Calgary and Alberta⁸

Regarding GDP per capita, the CFWR region performs like Calgary and Alberta as a whole. GDP per capita was an estimated \$72,012 in the region in December 2022 compared to \$73,370 in Calgary and \$73,742 in the province. Rocky View and Chestermere outperform the region, Calgary, and the province with a GDP per capita of \$75,746 and \$77,072, respectively. Strathmore, Kneehill, and Wheatland have a lower GDP per capita of \$64,503, \$66,580, and \$68,513.

The biggest three sectors in the CFWR region are mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; construction; and real estate, rental, and leasing. Disparities in sectors size in the CFWR regions are substantial and are shown in Table 1. Kneehill and Wheatland have a strong agricultural character, with the agriculture sector accounting for 19.3% and 22.2% of GDP on average. Rocky View, Strathmore, and Chestermere have a strong presence of mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; real estate, rental and leasing; construction; and public administration in their local economies.

Table 1: Biggest three industries in terms of GDP in the CFWR region and CFWR's municipalities (December 2022 estimates)^{9 10}

Rank	CFWR		Rocky View (East)		Kneehill	
	Industry	% Share of GDP	Industry	% Share of GDP	Industry	% Share of GDP

⁷ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada; Gross Domestic Product by Industry, Statistics Canada; Employment by Industry, Statistics Canada

⁸ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada; Gross Domestic Product by Industry, Statistics Canada; Employment by Industry, Statistics Canada

⁹ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada; Gross Domestic Product by Industry, Statistics Canada; Employment by Industry, Statistics Canada

¹⁰ A detailed table with GDP by sector for all sectors, the CFWR region, all municipalities, Calgary and Alberta is provided in the appendix.

1	Mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction	13.8%	Mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction	13.9%	Agriculture, forestry, logging and support	19.3%
2	Construction	11.4%	Construction	13.5%	Mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction	14.2%
3	Public administration	10.5%	Real estate, rental and leasing	11%	Public administration	10.5%
Rank	Wheatland		Strathmore		Chestermere	
	Industry	% Share of GDP	Industry	% Share of GDP	Industry	% Share of GDP
1	Agriculture, forestry, logging and support	22.2%	Mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction	14.2%	Real estate, rental and leasing	14.6%
2	Mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction	11.9%	Construction	11%	Mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction	14.1%
3	Construction	11.1%	Public administration	10.5%	Public administration	10.5%

The specialization of the region as a whole and some regions in mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction is a high-risk high-reward situation. This sector is strongly dependent on the price of oil, which can be rather unstable. As an illustration, Strathmore's GDP dropped 6% from August 2015 to January 2016 when oil prices fell from \$63 to \$43 a barrel during the same period. This is a major contraction considering that Canada's GDP grows with an average 1.6% a year. In the near future, oil prices are expected to rise slightly from a current day level of \$73.51/barrel to \$81/barrel in 2024 and \$78 in 2025.¹¹ This will most likely keep labour demand in this industry in the intermediate term at the current day level, but looking further ahead, labour demand is expected to decrease slowly due to Southern Alberta's oil and gas industry and production becoming saturated.

Agriculture, forestry, logging, and support is a less volatile industry and, generally, is a stable source of GDP. Even though the 12-month trend of the sector's GDP is trending upwards, labour demand in agriculture is diminishing. This decline is attributed to advancements in technology and automation, which have reduced the sector's reliance on labour.¹² The sector is expected to face challenges such as prolonged drought and increased foreign competition driving down prices, but farms are expected to maintain profitability due to further technological innovations.¹² This is good news for the sector but will further reduce its future labour demand.

Construction has seen strong growth in the region and peaked in 2013–2015. The sector is labour intensive and has trouble filling all vacancies. Notably, the residential construction industry is expected to grow amid Alberta's strong population growth. Although most new Albertans move to Edmonton or Calgary, historically high housing costs in Calgary have the potential to drive people out of the city and into Rocky View County, Chestermere, or Strathmore. However, higher interest rates might dampen the demand for housing and steep material prices are a challenge for both this industry and the sector. Two other main industries, industrial and commercial construction, are expected to grow as well, but volatility persists as they are sensitive to economic fluctuations. Overall, the sector is already struggling with labour shortages and has a 6.7% job vacancy rate in Alberta.¹³ This is only expected to increase as the sector grows further.

Real estate, rental, and leasing have grown tremendously in the CFWR region since 2002 and has almost doubled their GDP. In part, this can be explained by the strong population growth the region experienced, more than doubling its

¹¹ [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#)

¹² IBISWorld report

¹³ Table 14-10-0326-01, Statistics Canada

population from 34,855 in 2001 to 80,590 in 2021.¹⁴ The sector has also benefitted from the same economic trends as the construction sector such as high housing demand. Chestermere in particular has developed itself over the last decade as a commuter town for Calgary, driving up the local housing market and increasing the opportunities for this sector. The sector is also sensitive to the same types of threats as the construction sector and growth might slow down amid higher interest rates in the near future. The sector will likely continue to grow in the CFWR region. It is not particularly labour intensive but will create a number of new jobs over the coming years.

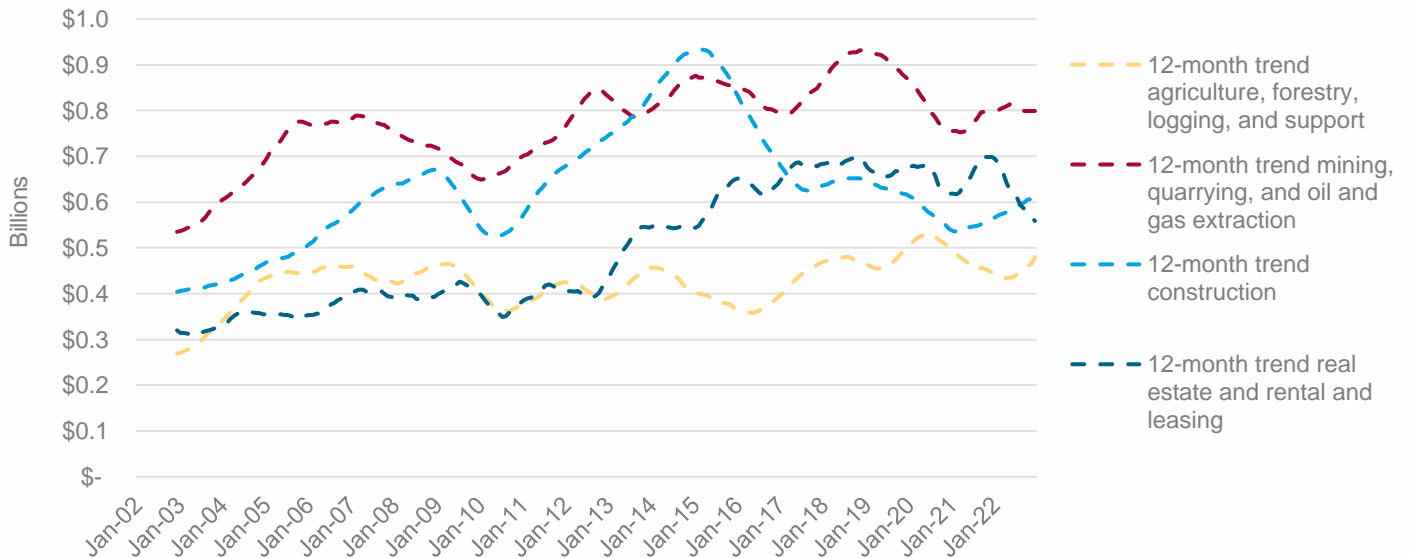


Figure 7: 12-month trend of CFWR four biggest sectors in terms of GDP¹⁵

2.2.2. BUSINESS COUNTS

Another way to look at sector sizes is by looking at how many businesses are active in a sector. Sector sizes based on business counts are substantially different compared to the sector sizes in terms of GDP. Table 2 shows the biggest sectors in terms of business counts for the CFWR region and municipalities. Mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction are overtaken by construction as the biggest sector in the region and in Rocky View. In Wheatland and Kneehill Counties, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting remain the biggest sector. In Strathmore, professional, scientific and technical services are the biggest sector, instead of mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction. In Chestermere, real estate, rental, and leasing is replaced as the biggest sector by transportation and warehousing.

Table 2: Total business and biggest sector in terms of business counts in the CFWR region and CFWR's municipalities (December 2023) ¹⁶			
	Total number of businesses	Biggest sector	% Share of total businesses
CFWR	4,382	Construction	16.2%
Rocky View County (East)	2,744	Construction	17.3%
Wheatland County	261	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	28.4%
Kneehill County	39	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	48.7%
Town of Strathmore	519	Professional, scientific and technical services	12.9%

¹⁴ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada

¹⁵ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada

¹⁶ Statistics Canada

City of Chestermere	819	Transportation and warehousing	16.2%
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Table 3 explores the business counts in further detail. It reveals that 67% of construction businesses in the CFWR region are located in Rocky View. In terms of industries within the construction sector, the majority of businesses are within the specialty trade contractors industry. Of the three industries making up the construction sector, 69.1% are in this industry. Construction is the biggest sector in Rocky View as well. It is also strongly concentrated in the specialty trade contractors industry (67.9%).

In Wheatland and Kneehill, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting is the biggest sector in terms of business counts. Most business in this sector are active in the crop production industry (63.5% and 68.4%) and a large share operate in the animal production and aquaculture industry (29.7% and 31.6%). In these counties, roughly half of the production is in farming oilseeds and grains, while approximately 30% is in cattle ranching and farming.

Professional, scientific, and technical services hold the largest share of business in Strathmore but, unfortunately, Statistics Canada does not have any industries defined within this sector. There is no more detailed data than the sector level available.

Chestermere holds the most businesses within the transportation and warehousing sector. There is a clear specialization within this sector as 92.5% of all businesses are active in the truck transportation industry. A very small percentage of businesses are active in other industries, such as support activities for transportation and couriers & messengers.

Table 3: Total business and biggest sector in terms of business counts in the CFWR region and CFWR's municipalities (December 2023)¹⁷			
Sector	Industries	Area	% Share of total businesses
Construction	Construction of buildings	CFWR	22.7%
		Rocky View County (East)	22.8%
	Heavy and civil engineering construction	CFWR	8.2%
		Rocky View County (East)	9.3%
	Specialty trade contractors	CFWR	69.1%
		Rocky View County (East)	67.9%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	Crop production	Wheatland County	63.5%
		Kneehill County	68.4%
	Animal production and aquaculture	Wheatland County	29.7%
		Kneehill County	31.6%
	Forestry and logging	Wheatland County	1.4%
		Kneehill County	0%
	Fishing, hunting and trapping	Wheatland County	0%
		Kneehill County	0%
	Support activities for agriculture and forestry	Wheatland County	5.4%
		Kneehill County	0%
Transportation and warehousing	Air transportation	City of Chestermere	0.0%
	Rail transportation	City of Chestermere	0.0%
	Water transportation	City of Chestermere	0.0%

¹⁷ Statistics Canada

	Truck transportation	City of Chestermere	92.5%
	Transit and ground passenger transportation	City of Chestermere	0.8%
	Pipeline transportation	City of Chestermere	0.0%
	Scenic and sightseeing transportation	City of Chestermere	0.0%
	Support activities for transportation	City of Chestermere	3.8%
	Postal service	City of Chestermere	0.0%
	Couriers and messengers	City of Chestermere	2.3%
	Warehousing and storage	City of Chestermere	0.8%

2.2.3. MEDIAN INCOME

Section Insights

Median household income in the CFWR region is higher than in Calgary and this is driven by exceptionally high household income in Chestermere and, to an extent, high household income in Rocky View (East).

Median income shows a similar pattern as GDP per capita. The median income is based on census data and the last year available is 2020. Moreover, median income is provided per census region and a weighted average (based on population) is calculated for regions consisting of multiple census regions.

Median individual income is plotted in Figure 8. Median income steadily rose in the CFWR region to \$45,316 from 2010 to 2020. Chestermere and Rocky View, with a median income of \$47,651 and \$48,000 in 2020, outperform the region, Calgary, and Alberta. Calgary's median income was \$44,400 and the province's median income was \$43,900, in comparison. Wheatland, Strathmore, and Kneehill have lower median incomes than Calgary and the province, \$43,763, \$42,800, and \$39,675, respectively. However, these counties and the town are closing the gap between Calgary and the province. Between 2015 and 2020, the provincial median income has decreased 3.7% and Calgary's median income rose 2.5%. In contrast, the median income of Strathmore grew 5.1%, Wheatland's grew 5.4%, and Kneehill's grew a substantial 9.8%, reflecting a strong performance. As a whole, the CFWR region has a population with relatively high incomes, providing regional businesses with customers that have healthy disposable incomes.

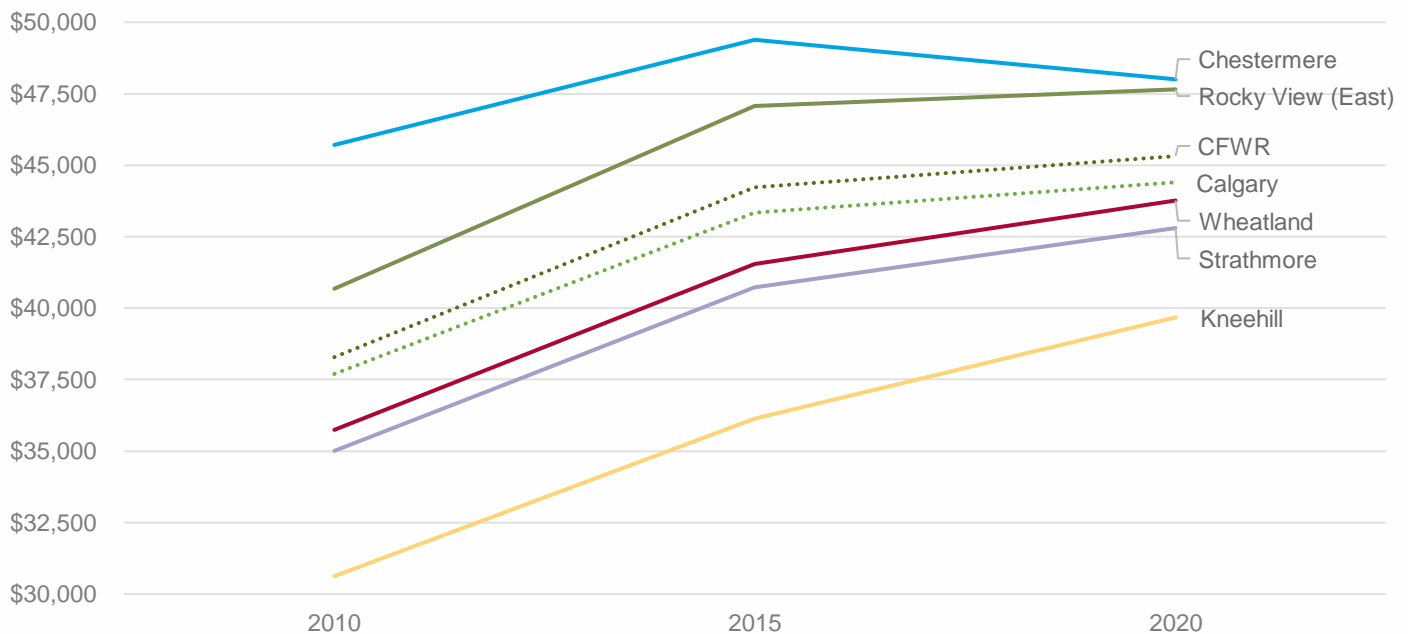


Figure 8: Median individual income (before tax) in the CFWR region and CFWR's municipalities and Calgary (2021)¹⁸

Median household income shows a similar pattern as individual median income. The difference between the CFWR region and Calgary is higher in terms of household income. Household income in Chestermere is the highest in the CFWR region and considerably higher than household income in Calgary. Unlike individual income, household income in Wheatland is higher than in Calgary. Strathmore's and Kneehill's household income is, as with individual income, lower than the regional number and Calgary's.

¹⁸ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada

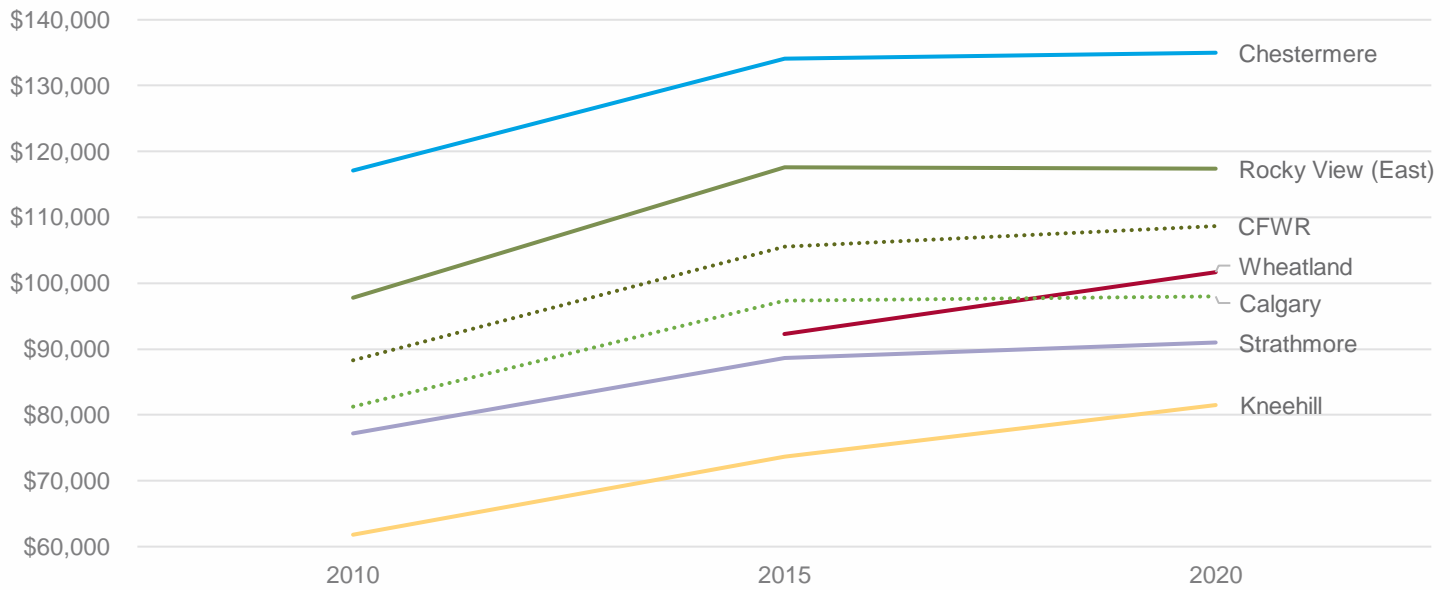


Figure 9: Median household income (before tax) in the CFWR region and CFWR's municipalities and Calgary (2021)¹⁹

2.2.4. AGRICULTURE

Section Insights

Farm production per acre (in dollar terms) is roughly 1.5 times more in Wheatland and Kneehill than in Rocky View because of larger farm sizes in these two counties and a stronger specialization in oilseed and grains farming, which is the most profitable type of farming.

Agriculture plays an important role in the economy of the CFWR region. The sector is especially critical to the economies of Wheatland and Kneehill Counties, where it is the biggest industry in terms of GDP. It is less important in Rocky View but still accounts for 5.6% of its GDP, ranking it as the seventh biggest sector in the county. Unfortunately, farm data was not more detailed than the municipal level which prevents assessing agriculture data exclusively for the part of Rocky View County within the scope of the CFWR. Therefore, in this section, Rocky View refers to the entirety of Rocky View County instead of merely the eastern part. Moreover, since agriculture only plays a minor part in the economies of Chestermere and Strathmore and as agricultural data is scarce for these areas, they will be omitted from the discussion in this section.

Farm numbers, as displayed in Figure 10, trended steadily upwards in Wheatland and Kneehill between 2011 and 2021, increasing 5.2% and 8.7% respectively. By comparison, the number of farms in the province decreased 4% between 2011 and 2021. Rocky View followed the trend of the province instead of experiencing steady growth. The number of farms decreased a substantial 12% between 2011 and 2016 and grew again with 0.6% from 2016 to 2021. Even though the agricultural industry in Wheatland and Kneehill appears more robust than in Rocky View, 42% of the CFWR region's farms are located in Rocky View.

¹⁹ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada

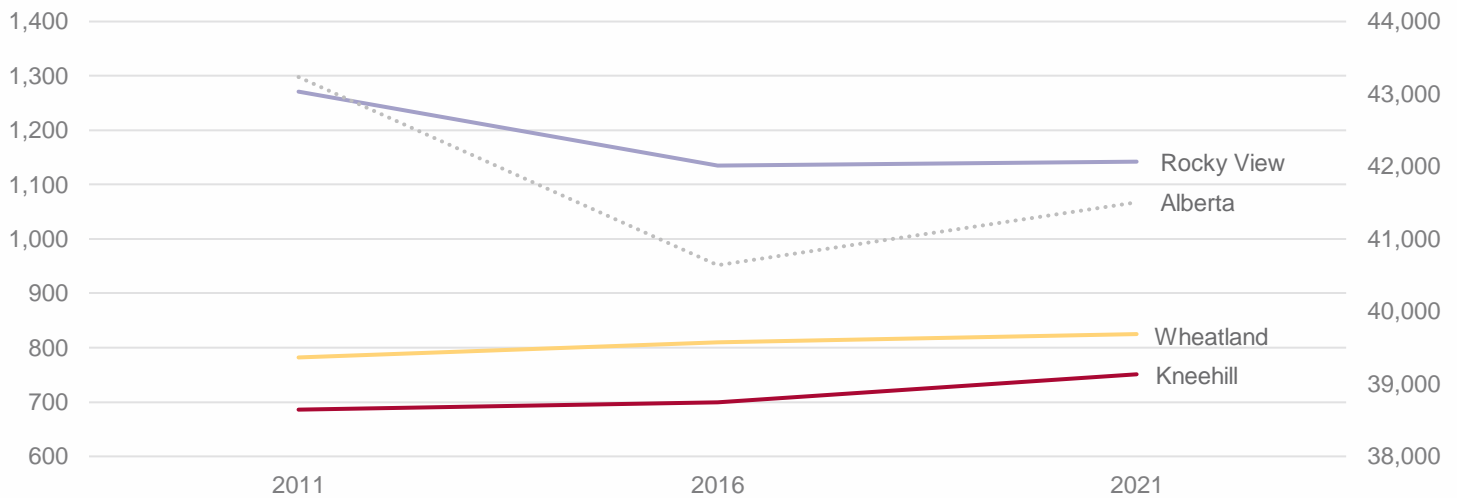


Figure 10: Total number of farms in Alberta (right axis), Rocky View, Wheatland and Kneehill Counties (left axis)²⁰

Total acres of farmland and farm size are also important metrics. In terms of acres of farmland, Wheatland County has the largest amount of the three counties in the CFWR region with 1.3 million acres. Rocky View County has the second most farmland with a little over 1 million acres. Kneehill County has, with approximately 950,000 acres of farmland, the least amount of farmland of the three counties.

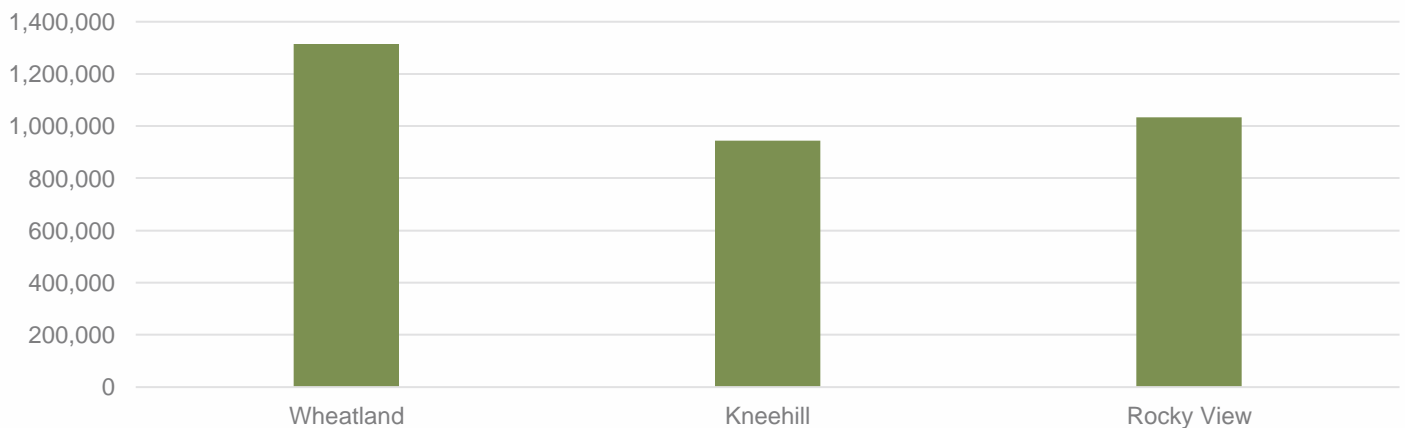


Figure 11: Total acres of farmland in Wheatland, Kneehill and Rocky View Counties²¹

Not only does Wheatland County have the greatest amount of farmland, the farms in this County are also the biggest. An average farm in Wheatland is just shy of 1600 acres (6.45 square kilometers). Farms in Kneehill are the second biggest in the CFWR region with 1250 acres per farm (5.05 square kilometers). Farms in Rocky View County are the smallest with 900 acres (3.64 square kilometers) per farm. This is also smaller than the Albertan average of 1185 acres (4.8 square kilometers) per farm.

²⁰ Farm types, Statistics Canada

²¹ Land tenure, Statistics Canada

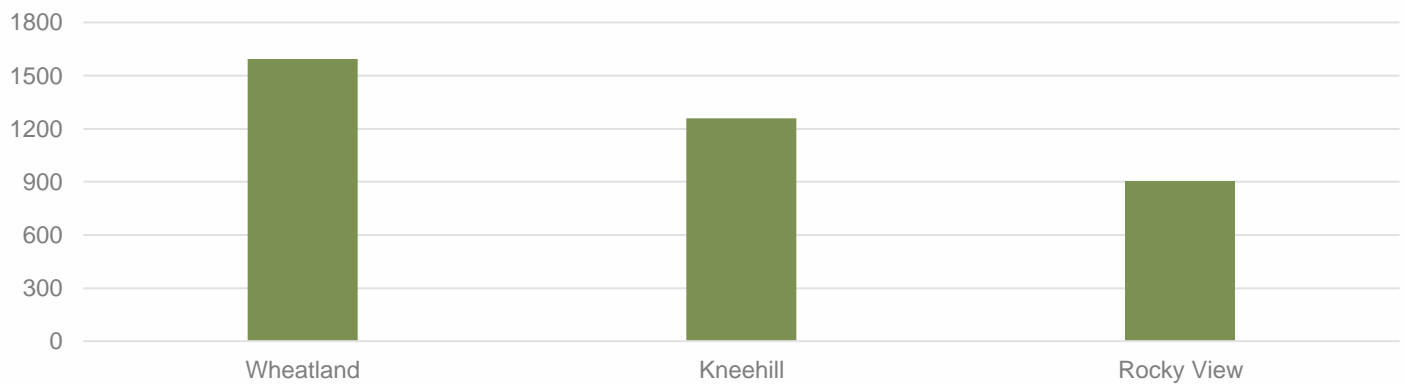


Figure 12: Acres per farm in Wheatland, Kneehill and Rocky View Counties²²

Production per acre of farmland is particularly high in Wheatland and Kneehill. An acre of farmland in these two counties is 57% and 47% more productive, respectively, than an average acre in Alberta. The province and all three counties saw the production per acre increase substantially since 2011. Production per acre increased with 99.6% in Alberta and between 64% and 83.4% in the three counties.

Production per acre of farmland differs considerably between the three counties. An acre of farmland in Wheatland or Kneehill yields 42% and 51% more production than an acre of farmland in Rocky View. This lower production per acre explains why, in Rocky View Country, the agricultural industry is smaller in terms of GDP than the agricultural industry in Wheatland or Kneehill, even though Rocky View has a similar number of acres of farmland as the other two counties.

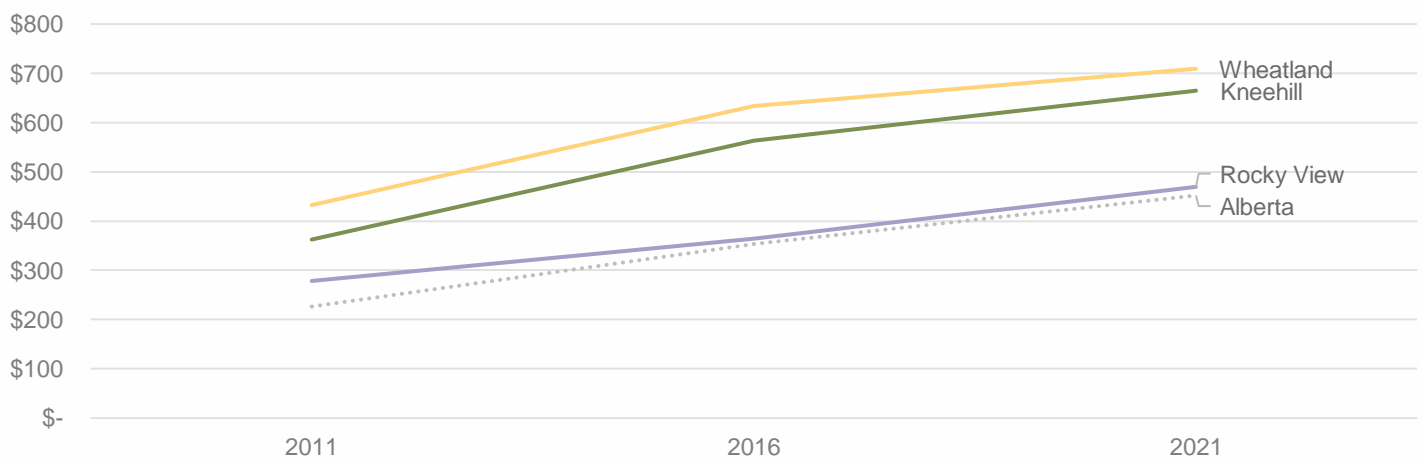


Figure 13: Farm production per acre of farmland in in Alberta, Rocky View, Wheatland and Kneehill Counties²³

An explanation for the difference in production per acre between Rocky View and the other two counties is the specialization of farms in the counties. Table 4 breaks down the type of farms per county. In Wheatland and Kneehill, 48% and 50% of all farms are farming oilseeds and grains, compared to 29% in Rocky View. According to Statistics Canada, oilseed and grain farms are the most profitable farms. Moreover, as identified prior, farms in Wheatland and Kneehill are larger than farms in Rocky View and, according to the same source, larger farms have greater profit margins. Taken together, these factors explain why an acre of farmland in Rocky View produces less value than an acre in the other two counties.

²² Ballard calculations; Land tenure, Statistics Canada; Farm types, Statistics Canada

²³ Land tenure, Statistics Canada; Operating revenues, Statistics Canada

Table 4: Share of farms per farm type in Rocky View, Wheatland and Kneehill Counties (2021)²⁴

Farm type	% Share of total number of farms		
	Rocky View County	Wheatland County	Kneehill County
Cattle ranching and farming	35%	27%	27%
Hog and pig farming	0%	0%	1%
Poultry and egg production	1%	1%	4%
Sheep and goat farming	1%	1%	2%
Other animal production	15%	9%	7%
Oilseed and grain farming	29%	48%	50%
Vegetable and melon farming	1%	1%	0%
Fruit and tree nut farming	1%	0%	0%
Greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production	2%	1%	1%
Other crop farming	16%	11%	8%

2.2.5. WORKER COMMUTE

Data on workers' commuting destinations in the region provides insight on the economic linkages in the region. How far workers travel from their place of residence to their workplace varies depending on the region within CFWR, as seen in Table 5.

Table 5: Workers commuting destination, by percent of total residents in municipality (2021)^{25 26}

	Commute to a different province or territory	Commute to a different census division	Commute to a different census subdivision (municipality) within census division of residence	Commute within census subdivision (municipality) of residence
Rocky View County (East)	0.6%	7.2%	71%	21%
Wheatland County	0.9%	36%	42%	22%
Kneehill County	0.3%	15%	41%	44%
Strathmore	1.2%	34%	12%	52%
Chestermere	0.6%	3.9%	79%	17%
CFWR	0.7%	16%	55%	29%
<i>Calgary</i>	<i>0.9%</i>	<i>1.6%</i>	<i>6.3%</i>	<i>91%</i>
<i>Alberta</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>4.2%</i>	<i>23%</i>	<i>72%</i>

The CFWR region encompasses a region which is part of Census Division (CD) 5 and 6. Rocky View County and Chestermere are a part of CD 5 whereas Kneehill County, Wheatland County, and Strathmore fall under CD 6. For reference, a map of the census divisions, counties, and other municipalities is provided in Figure 14.

²⁴ Farm types, Statistics Canada

²⁵ A census division comprises multiple municipalities and municipalities are usually census subdivisions.

²⁶ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada.

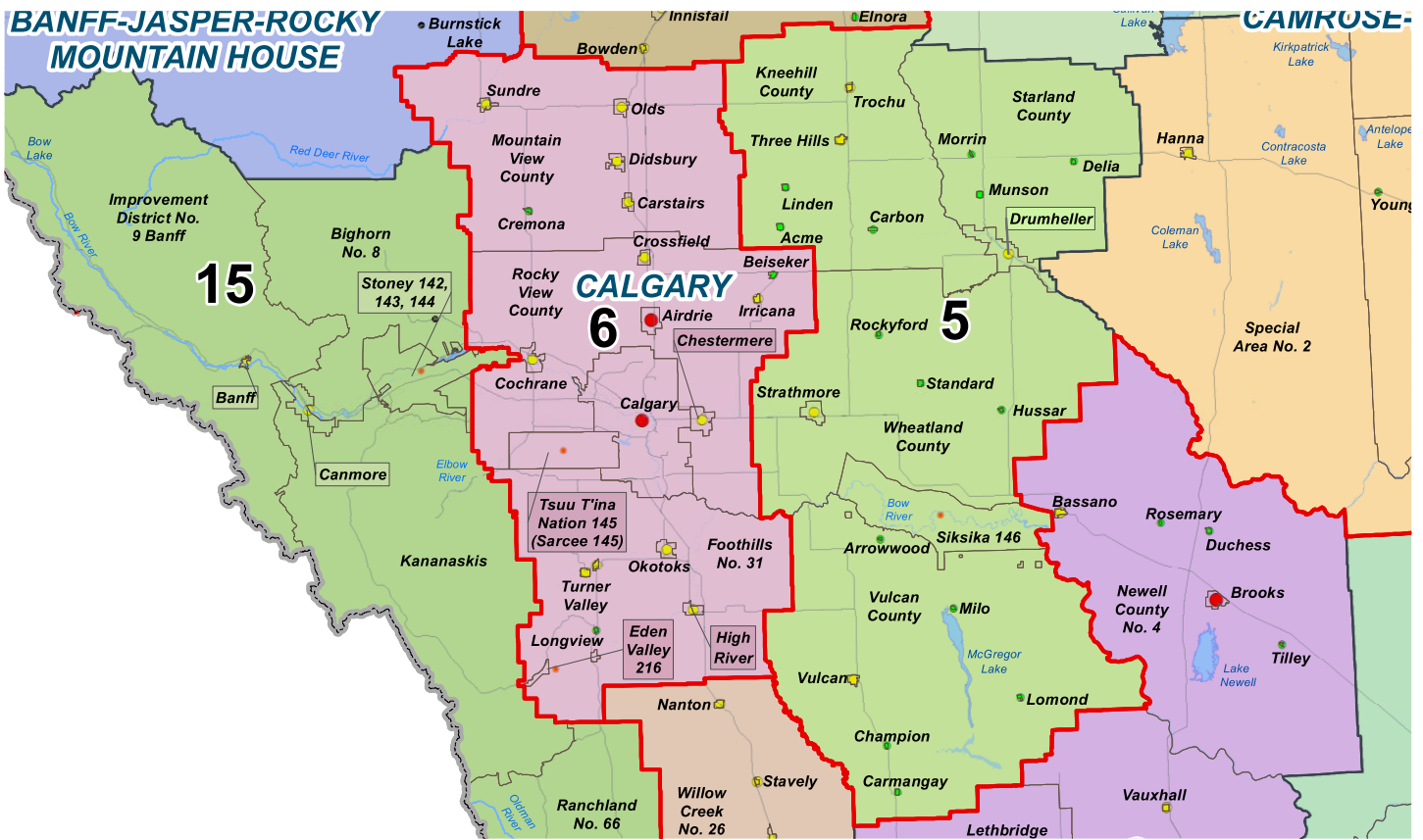


Figure 14: Map of Census Divisions 5 and 6.²⁷

Most workers living in Rocky View County (East) commute outside of their municipality but within CD 6. Likely, the commuting destination of these workers is Calgary. It is worth noting that Irricana and Beiseker have an increased portion of workers leaving CD 6 for work. They are close to the border of CD 5, making it easier to commute to a different CD for work.

In Wheatland County, a large share of its labour force is leaving the municipality for work. Only 22% of workers residing in Wheatland County work in the County and 42% commute to another municipality. Moreover, a sizeable portion commute outside of CD 5 for work (36%). Within Wheatland County, the Villages of Hussar and Standard both experience higher rates of residents remaining in the municipalities for work (50% and 52%, respectively).

When looking at Kneehill County, there is a similar share of workers commuting outside the census subdivision (41%) and workers who remain in the census subdivision (44%). Within the County, the Village of Linden and the Towns of Three Hills and Trochu all have high rates of workers who remain in their respective municipalities, all between 69–81%. On the other hand, the Villages of Carbon and Acme have lower shares of their workers remaining in the municipality to work, 27% and 36%, respectively. One reason for this divergence could be due to the characteristics of the local economies. While the first three municipalities have a relatively larger spread of businesses across various industries, the latter two are concentrated in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting. It follows that the areas with a larger spread of businesses have a stronger chance of retaining their workers as there are a variety of jobs available to residents. Conversely, residents living in Carbon and Acme who do not work in the agriculture industry need to commute to a different region to work in their occupation.

²⁷ Government of Alberta

With regard to Strathmore, a majority of residents work in Strathmore (52%). Compared to the CFWR region as a whole, Strathmore has a higher level of retaining its residents for employment but it has a similar level of retainment as the other towns and villages in the region. As for the higher retainment of urban areas in general, a larger population and a higher concentration of businesses provides residents with a better chance finding employment within the municipality. However, a sizeable minority of workers living in the town (48%) still leave the town for work. Of those leaving Strathmore for work, 72% are also leaving the census division. Given Calgary's proximity to Strathmore and it being outside of the boundaries of CD. 5, it is likely that a majority of the 72% of those leaving Strathmore for work are working in Calgary. However, this is not verifiable as the census only reports in which geographic area a worker leaves and does not detail where exactly the worker is employed.

Unlike Strathmore, an overwhelming majority of workers residing in Chestermere do leave the municipality for work. The proximity to Calgary likely attracts people who work in Calgary but live in Chestermere. This would explain why most of those who leave Chestermere to work remain in the same census division, CD 6, as it also includes Calgary. Beyond proximity, the differences in educational attainment in each municipality may also explain why Calgary seems to attract more workers from Chestermere than from Strathmore. Whereas in Chestermere 24% of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, this number is only 14% in Strathmore.

2.2.6. MEDIAN DWELLING VALUES

Median dwelling values in the CFWR region are close to the median values of Calgary in 2021. The median house value in the CFWR region swelled considerably more from 2011 to 2021 than in Calgary. Median value in the CFWR region increased 22.1% and 13.8% in Calgary. The strongest risers within the CFWR region are Rocky View and Wheatland. Here, median dwelling values increased 35.5% and 26.9%, respectively, between 2011 and 2021. House values in Kneehill are practically unchanged since 2011 and increased 0.5% since 2011. It is important to note that this data is from 2021 and, since 2021, the housing market has heated up significantly. Hence, median dwelling values are likely to be inflated in 2024 compared to the available data.

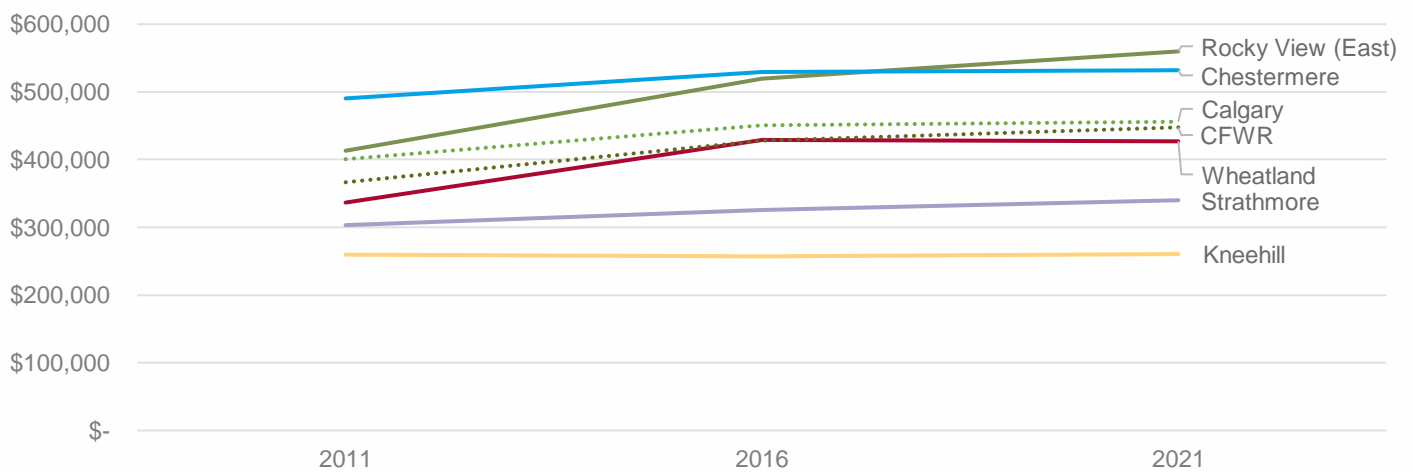


Figure 15: Median dwelling value in the CFWR region and CFWR's municipalities and Calgary (2021)²⁸

2.2.7. MEDIAN SHELTER COSTS

²⁸ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada

Section Insight

Monthly shelter costs for both owned and rented dwellings in the CFWR region are similar to Calgary and the province, but the region has large disparities with Chestermere and Rocky View (East) being more expensive and Kneehill and Wheatland being cheaper than Calgary and the province.

Median shelter costs in the CFWR region are similar to the shelter costs in Calgary and Alberta.²⁹ Median shelter costs for an owned dwelling are \$1,675 a month and \$1,334 a month for a rented dwelling in the region. Compared to 2016, median costs for an owned dwelling increased 2.2% and 8.6% for a rented dwelling.

Within the region, shelter costs are the highest in Chestermere for both owned and rented dwellings. Chestermere's shelter costs are substantially higher than the costs in Calgary and Alberta. Households spend the least on shelter costs in Kneehill and residents in Wheatland also experience low shelter costs. In these two counties, shelter costs are considerably lower than for the region as a whole, Calgary, and the province. Kneehill is also the only region where shelter costs are lower for owned dwellings than for rentals.

Overall, the region is not exceptionally more expensive or cheaper than Calgary or Alberta. The higher costs in Chestermere are outweighed by the lower costs in Kneehill and Wheatland, balancing out the overall shelter costs in the region.

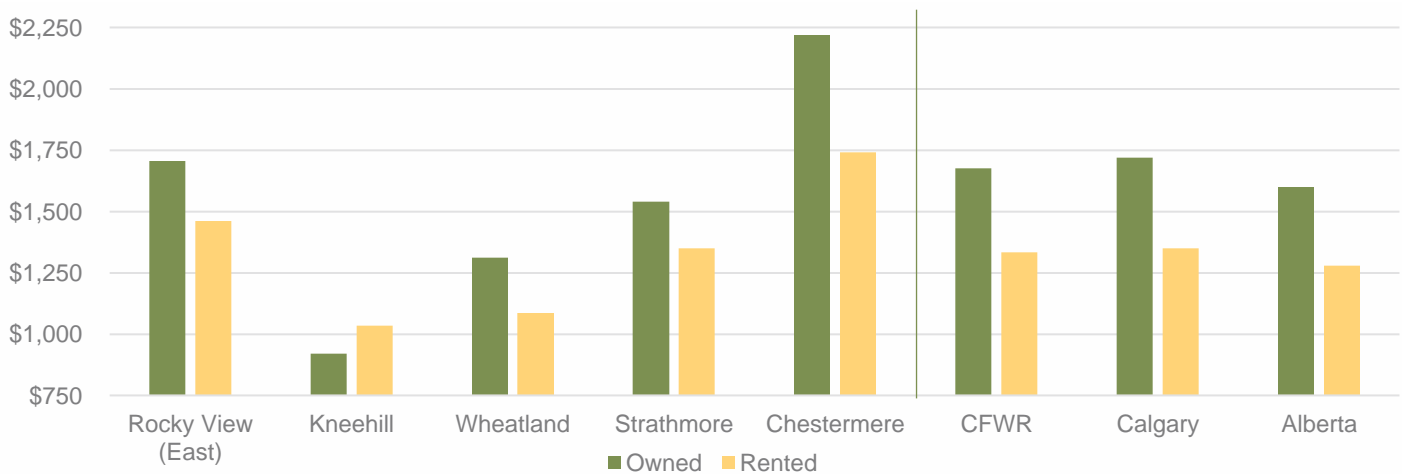


Figure 16: Median monthly shelter costs for owned and rented dwellings in the CFWR region, CFWR's counties and cities, Calgary and Alberta (2021)³⁰

2.2.8. MAJOR PROJECTS

The CFWR region is attracting numerous major projects from a variety of sectors including materials manufacturing, food processing, sustainable energy production, and commercial real estate development. An overview of all 13 major projects that have been proposed or are currently under construction is provided in Table 6. Major projects are defined as private or public sector projects valued at \$5 million or greater. They sum to more than \$1.07 billion in estimated costs in the CFWR region.

While all these projects are expected to increase regional production for local communities, their near-term impact on labour demand will be mixed given that the different projects will have varying labour requirements to operate. Moreover, some of

²⁹ Shelter costs refer to all costs involved in living in the owned or rented dwelling (e.g. utilities, mortgage, rent, etc.)

³⁰ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada

the projects are still in the developmental phase and may not be operating in the near future.³¹ The projects that will require labour for operations are expected to add up to 1,798 jobs to the region, which excludes labour demand generated by the construction of these projects.

In terms of the spread of developments throughout the region, Rocky View County hosts 8 of the 13 major projects in the CFWR region, Wheatland County accounts for 4 major projects, and Strathmore accounts for 1 major project. Kneehill County and the City of Chestermere currently have no major projects in their areas.

Table 6: Summary of major projects in the CFWR region (as of March 2024)³²

Municipality	Project Name	Industry	Estimated Cost	Potential Operational Jobs
Town of Strathmore	Phyto Organix Foods Processing Facility	Food manufacturing	\$231 million	80
Rocky View County (East)	Asphalt Shingle Reprocessing Facility	Material recovery facilities (or more broadly: waste management and remediation services)	\$15 million	15
	Citylink Logistics Centre	Transportation and warehousing	\$62.5 million	Unknown
	Interlink Logistics Park Building	Transportation and warehousing	\$115 million	Unknown
	Stoney North Logistics Centre	Transportation and warehousing	\$24.8 million	Unknown
	Cross Roads Corner Warehouse	Warehousing and storage	\$36 million	Unknown
	High Plains Industrial Park	Real estate	\$70 million	Unknown
	Charger Industrial Buildings	Real estate	\$15.7 million	Unknown
	Crossfield Hydrogen Hub	Industrial gas manufacturing (more broadly: chemicals manufacturing)	Unknown	Unknown
Wheatland County	Ardenode Renewable Natural Gas Facility	Oil and gas extraction	Unknown	3
	Project Wheatland BioFuel Facility	Oil and gas extraction	\$285 million	100
	De Havilland Field Aircraft Manufacturing and Operations Center	Aerospace	Unknown	1500
	CGC Wallboard Manufacturing Plant	Manufacturing	\$210 million	100

2.3. REGIONAL LABOUR MARKET

2.3.1. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

³¹ Speculative construction is defined as “the activity of building [property] without having any buyers waiting for them”, according to [Cambridge Dictionary](#)

³² Alberta Major Projects, <https://majorprojects.alberta.ca/>

Section Insights

Unemployment in the region is generally lower than in Calgary or Alberta.

Unemployment in the CFWR region tends to be lower than in Calgary or Alberta as a whole.³³ In 2021, it stood at 9.8% compared to 12.5% in Calgary and 11.5% in Alberta. These are historically high numbers, a consequence of the economic turmoil created by the pandemic in the years prior to 2021. However, the CFWR region as a whole and CFWR's communities all saw lower unemployment rates than in Calgary or Alberta in 2011, 2016, and 2021. It is a sign that the region's employment is more robust than Calgary's or Alberta's.

Between 2011 and 2021, the unemployment rate doubled in the province. In the CFWR region and Calgary, unemployment also roughly doubled. Within the region, there are differences in how strongly unemployment increased between 2011 and 2021. Unemployment in Wheatland, Kneehill, and Strathmore increased by a factor between 1.67 and 1.87. This is substantial, but comparable to the increase seen in Calgary and the province. However, unemployment in Rocky View and Chestermere rose by factors of 2.12 and 2.31, respectively. These increases are higher than Alberta's factor and more similar to Calgary's increase in unemployment. It illustrates that the economies of Rocky View and, especially, Chestermere, are much more intertwined with Calgary's economy.

Wheatland's employment has been particularly robust. The county consistently had the lowest unemployment rate and saw unemployment increase the least of all regions during the pandemic. As this data is from 2021, unemployment rates are likely to be lower currently as the economic shock of the pandemic is further in the past. However, it is probable that the distribution between the regions is similar as in 2021.

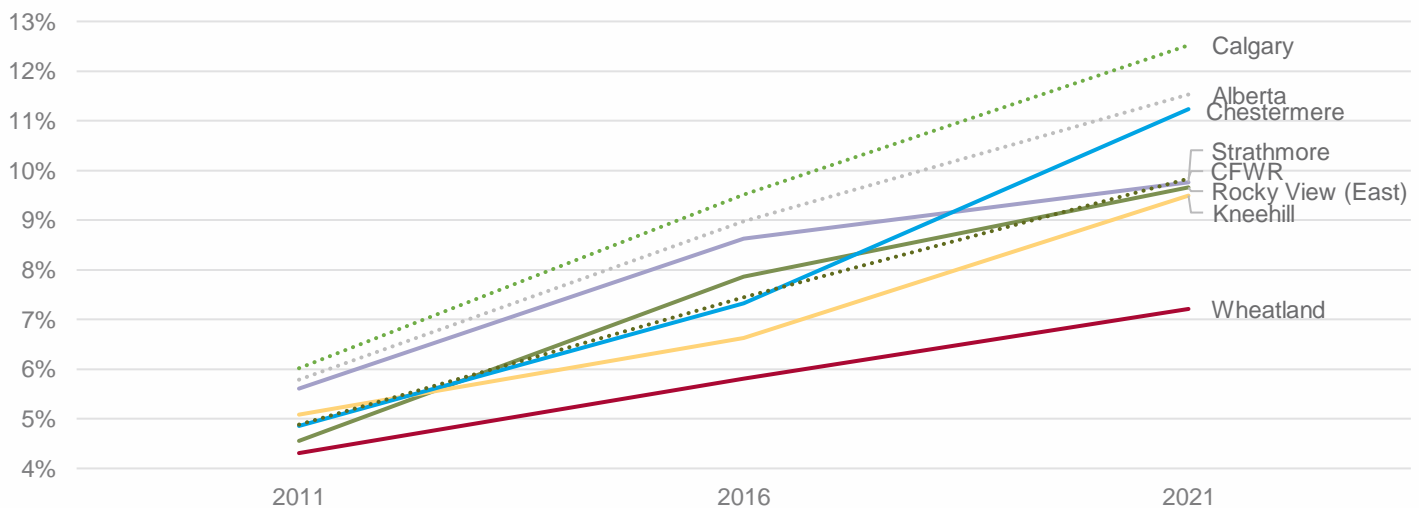


Figure 17: Unemployment rate in the CFWR region, CFWR's counties and cities, Calgary and Alberta³⁴

2.3.2. JOB VACANCY RATE

Section Insights

Job vacancies are likely to be higher in the CFWR region than in Alberta and Calgary and are not trending down as they are for the province and for Calgary.

³³ Unemployment rate is defined as everyone who is actively looking for work divided by everyone who is employed.

³⁴ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada

Job vacancy rates in the economic region which encompasses the CFWR region are substantially higher at the end of 2023 than prior to 2020.³⁵ Unfortunately, because of data limitations, job vacancy rates are not available for the CFWR region. The lowest regional level available is for the Camrose-Drumheller economic zone, which covers an area from Vulcan County to Lloydminster. The economic characteristics of this region are similar to most of the counties covered by CFWR but caution has to be used in interpreting this data.

The region is not alone in struggling to fill job vacancies and the upward trend has been observed in Calgary, the province, and the country. Except a jump in the second quarter of 2018, job vacancy rates in the Camrose-Drumheller region were between 2–3% prior to 2021, similar to Calgary’s and Alberta’s vacancy rates. Vacancy rates soared everywhere throughout 2021 as the pandemic came to an end and restrictions were lifted. Vacancy rates in Calgary and Alberta are since slowly trending downwards and were 1.5% and 0.8% lower in the third quarter of 2023 than their respective peaks. In contrast, for the Camrose-Drumheller region job vacancy rates are not trending down yet but remaining near the peak level of 4.5%. Overall, the region appears to struggle more with filling job vacancies than Calgary and the province.

As mentioned prior, the Camrose-Drumheller region is much bigger than the CFWR region. In the CFWR region, it is likely that Rocky View and Chestermere have job vacancy rates closer to Calgary’s as their economies are more intertwined with Calgary. Wheatland, Kneehill, and Strathmore are less intertwined with Calgary’s economy and are expected to have job vacancy rates closer to the number of the Camrose-Drumheller region.

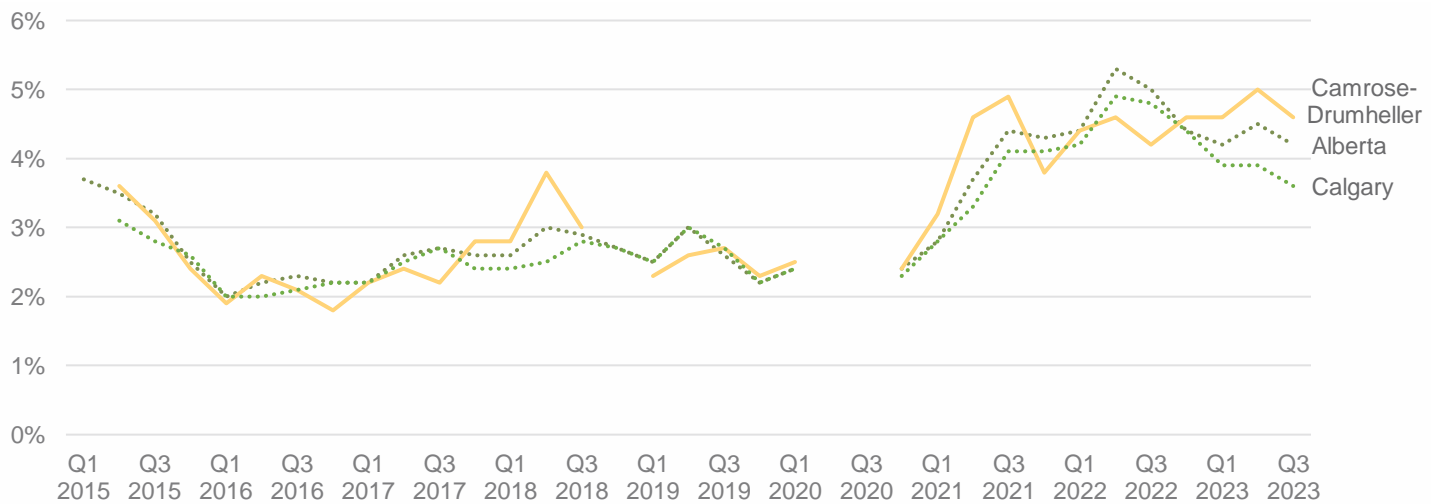


Figure 18: Job vacancy rates in the Camrose-Drumheller region, Calgary and Alberta³⁶

2.3.3. LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Section Insights

Labour force participation in the CFWR region is healthy and high for an advanced economy.

³⁵ Job vacancy refers to the number of job vacancies or vacant positions on the last business day of the month divided by labour demand (the sum of occupied positions and vacant positions)

³⁶ Table 14-10-0325-01, Statistics Canada

In the CFWR region as a whole, labour force participation has been similar to Calgary's and Alberta's labour force participation.³⁷ It was a few percentage points lower than Calgary's and Alberta's in 2011 but participation rose in the CFWR region between 2011 and 2016 to the levels of Calgary and Alberta. Labour force participation generally changes slowly and participation rates have been trending around 82–83% in the CFWR region, Calgary, and Alberta. This is a slightly higher participation rate than in Canada as a whole.³⁸ The participation rates for CFWR, Calgary and Alberta are healthy and relatively high compared to other advanced economies.³⁹

Within the CFWR region, most cities and counties have similar participation rates as the wider region. However, it is worth mentioning two counties separately. Rocky View had a substantial lower participation rate than the CFWR region in 2011 but participation strongly increased by 14.5% between 2011 and 2016. In contrast, Wheatland started at a similar participation rate as the CFWR region in 2011 but trended down between 2011 and 2021. It fell 5% from 80.3% in 2011 to 75.3% in 2021.

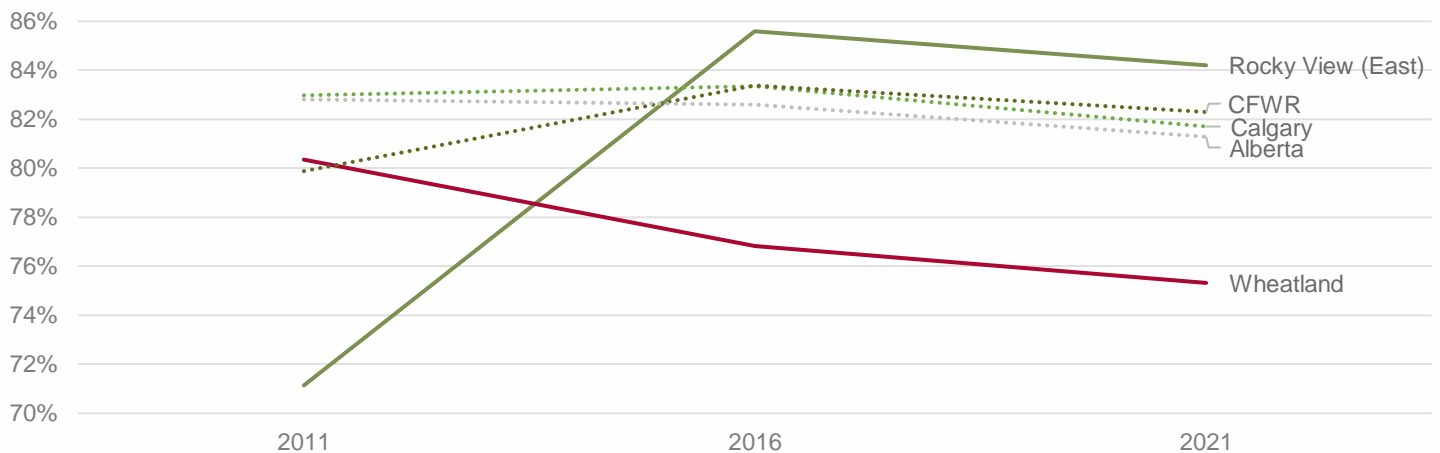


Figure 19: Labour force participation in the CFWR region, CFWR's counties and cities, Calgary and Alberta⁴⁰

³⁷ The labour force participation rate is equal to the total labour force (comprised of those who are employed and unemployed) divided by the total working age population (aged between 15 and 64 years old).

³⁸ Canada's participation rate stood at 79.4% in 2021.

³⁹ Labour Force Participation Rate, OECD

⁴⁰ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada

2.3.4. EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR

Section Insights

The three biggest sectors in terms of employment are construction, retail trade, and health care and social assistance. As these sectors generally have lower labour productivity, the last two sectors are not amongst the three sectors responsible for the highest contributions to GDP.

In the CFWR region, construction accounts for the largest share of employment. It was the second biggest sector in terms of GDP and, as this is a labour-intensive sector, it is not a surprise that construction has the largest share of employment. Retail trade (9.8%) and health care and social assistance (9.1%) are number two and three in terms of employment.⁴¹ These sectors did not show up in the top three in terms of GDP, but they are sectors which are traditionally labour-intensive.

Within the CFWR region, there are a few shifts in the top three sectors compared to the top three in terms of GDP. In Rocky View, construction becomes the biggest sector, followed by retail trade and professional, scientific, and technical services. In Kneehill and Wheatland, most employment is in the agriculture, forestry, logging and support sector. In Kneehill, health care and social assistance is the second biggest sector followed by construction. Construction is the second biggest sector in Wheatland and retail trade is the third biggest sector. Retail trade is the biggest sector in terms of employment in Strathmore, followed closely by health care and social assistance, construction holds place number three. In Chestermere, the three sectors holding most employment have a very similar share of employment. It is important to note that, when looking at this ranking, the difference between the three is not significant. However, it does reveal that none of the top three sectors in terms of GDP appear in the list of biggest sectors in terms of employment.

Overall, the employment by sector data reveals that most employment in the region is focused in sectors that do not contribute as greatly to GDP. Generally, labour productivity in construction, retail trade, health care and social assistance and professional, scientific and technical services is not as high as labour productivity in, for instance, mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction. This explains why a significant proportion of the region's labour force can be working in, for example, retail trade, but the biggest sector could be mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction.

⁴¹ A detailed table with employment by sector for all sectors, the CFWR region and all municipalities is provided in the appendix.

Table 7: Biggest three industries in terms of employment in the CFWR region and CFWR's municipalities (December 2023 estimates)⁴²

Rank	CFWR		Rocky View County (East)		Kneehill County	
	Industry	% Share of employment	Industry	% Share of employment	Industry	% Share of employment
1	Construction	10.2%	Construction	13.4%	Agriculture, forestry, logging and support	14.3%
2	Retail trade	9.4%	Retail trade	9.5%	Health care and social assistance	9.8%
3	Health care and social assistance	9.2%	Professional, scientific and technical services	7.8%	Construction	8.7%
Rank	Wheatland County		Town of Strathmore		City of Chestermere	
	Industry	% Share of employment	Industry	% Share of employment	Industry	% Share of employment
1	Agriculture, forestry, logging and support	18.4%	Retail trade	11.9%	Health care and social assistance	10.2%
2	Construction	10.0%	Health care and social assistance	11.5%	Professional, scientific and technical services	10.0%
3	Retail trade	7.0%	Construction	8.3%	Retail trade	9.9%

The biggest changes in employment were in the business, building and other support services; and the professional, scientific and technical services sectors saw the strongest increase in the CFWR region (49.6% and 43.1%, respectively). Employment decreased the most in the agriculture, forestry, logging and support sector. In December 2023, there are 1,730 fewer jobs in this sector compared to December 2013, amounting to a decrease of 38.3%. GDP in this sector has not decreased since 2013 and actually grew 25% between December 2013 and December 2022. This seems contradictory at first, but it reflects the labour-saving innovations in the agriculture, forestry, logging and support sector as discussed in section 1.3.1. The second largest decrease in employment is in the mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction. In this sector, the decrease in employment results from a decrease in GDP produced by this sector (4% less in December 2022 compared to December 2013) combined with labour-saving innovations. It is plausible that employment in these two sectors will continue to decrease as these labour-saving innovations are likely to continue.

Within the CFWR region, business, building, and other support services is the strongest growing sector in all municipalities except in Wheatland, and Chestermere. In Wheatland, the finance and insurance sector saw the strongest employment growth and in Chestermere health care and social assistance grew the most. Other strong growers are information, culture, and recreation in Kneehill and professional, scientific, and technical services in Strathmore and Chestermere.

In Rocky View and Chestermere, agriculture, forestry, logging and support sector saw the largest decrease in employment. In all municipalities except for Kneehill, mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction is the second strongest decreasing sector in terms of employment. Other big decreases in employment are observed in the real estate and rental and leasing and utilities sectors.

⁴² Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada; Employment by Industry, Statistics Canada

Table 8: Top two strongest growing sectors and top two strongest decreasing sectors in terms of employment in the CFWR region and CFWR's municipalities (% change between December 2013 and December 2023)⁴³

Rank	CFWR		Rocky View County (East)		Kneehill County	
	Industry	% Change	Industry	% Change	Industry	% Change
Growing						
1	Business, building and other support services	49.6%	Business, building and other support services	54.7%	Business, building and other support services	99.2%
2	Professional, scientific and technical services	43.1%	Health care and social assistance	37.0%	Information, culture and recreation	65.7%
Decreasing						
1	Agriculture, forestry, logging and support	-38.3%	Agriculture, forestry, logging and support	-46.1%	Real estate and rental and leasing	-69.1%
2	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	-35.2%	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	-37.6%	Utilities	-58.6%
Rank	Wheatland County		Town of Strathmore		City of Chestermere	
	Industry	% Change	Industry	% Change	Industry	% Change
Growing						
1	Finance and insurance	90.7%	Business, building and other support services	68.4%	Health care and social assistance	65.8%
2	Health care and social assistance	32.0%	Professional, scientific and technical services	47.2%	Professional, scientific and technical services	56.4%
Decreasing						
1	Accommodation and food services	-54.0%	Real estate and rental and leasing	-48.2%	Agriculture, forestry, logging and support	-40.3%
2	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	-50.9%	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	-41.5%	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	-22.6%

⁴³ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada; Employment by Industry, Statistics Canada

2.3.5. EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

Employment by occupation asks individuals what their occupation is rather than asking in which sector they are employed. For instance, an individual could be working in sales in the construction sector. In total, there are 10 broad occupational classifications available for the regional level of the CFWR.

The biggest occupation in the CFWR region is trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations. 23.1% of the labour force works in this occupation in the region. It is the biggest for the CFWR region and for all municipalities except for Wheatland. In the municipalities, between 21.2% and 26.6% of the labour force works in this occupational category. In Wheatland, most people work in the natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations. In Kneehill, this is the second-most common occupation and it only shows up in the top three for these two counties. This is not strange considering that agriculture and mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction are the biggest sectors in terms of GDP in these counties.

The second biggest occupation in the CFWR region is sales and service occupations. 21.8% of the labour force works in this occupation and it is the second biggest occupation in Rocky View, Strathmore, and Chestermere. It is the third biggest occupation in Kneehill and Wheatland. This fits with the picture provided by employment by sector. In these five areas, retail trade, professional, scientific, and technical services, and health care and social assistance hold large shares of total employment. Occupations in these three industries can mostly be classified in the sales and service occupations.

The business, finance and administration occupational group is the third biggest in the CFWR region and the third biggest in Rocky View, Strathmore and Chestermere.

Table 9: Biggest three occupation categories in the CFWR region and CFWR's municipalities (2021)⁴⁴						
Rank	CFWR		Rocky View County (East)		Kneehill County	
	Industry	% Share of employment	Industry	% Share of employment	Industry	% Share of employment
1	Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	23.1%	Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	26.4%	Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	21.2%
2	Sales and service occupations	21.8%	Sales and service occupations	20.2%	Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations	19.5%
3	Business, finance and administration occupations	17.2%	Business, finance and administration occupations	19.0%	Sales and service occupations	19.1%
Rank	Wheatland County		Town of Strathmore		City of Chestermere	
	Industry	% Share of employment	Industry	% Share of employment	Industry	% Share of employment
1	Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations	24.3%	Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	26.6%	Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	23.5%
2	Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	23.2%	Sales and service occupations	20.7%	Sales and service occupations	21.8%
3	Sales and service occupations	17.6%	Business, finance and administration occupations	15.6%	Business, finance and administration occupations	19.9%

2.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The CFWR region has a growing population that is slowly aging. However, there are more people under the age of 15 in the region than in Calgary and it would be valuable for future labour supply to keep them in the region when they enter working age. The population is decently skilled, but there are substantially fewer people with a postsecondary certificates, diplomas, or degrees than in Calgary and the province.

The region has experienced decent GDP growth since 2002. The growth pattern of the CFWR region has followed a similar pattern as Calgary's and, to a lesser extent, Alberta's. The region has a strong specialization in the mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (13.8% of GDP), construction (11.4% of GDP) and public administration (10.5% of GDP). Kneehill and Wheatland differ and have a strong specialization in agriculture, forestry, logging, and support (19.3% and 22.2% of GDP). Chestermere differs as well and is specialized in real estate, rental and leasing (14.6% of GDP). GDP growth has followed the growth path of Calgary more closely than provincial growth. GDP per capita in the region is similar to Calgary

⁴⁴ Ballard calculations; Census of Population, Statistics Canada

and Alberta. Rocky View and Chestermere outperform the region, Calgary, and the province, whereas Strathmore, Kneehill, and Wheatland have a lower GDP per capita.

Sector sizes are considerably different when assessed using business counts instead of GDP. In the CFWR region, the biggest sector in terms of business counts is construction. Two-thirds of these business are located in Rocky View and, consequentially, it is also the largest sector in Rocky View. 70% of all businesses in this sector are active within the specialty trade contractors industry. In Wheatland and Kneehill Counties, agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting is the biggest sector in terms of business counts. Most business in this sector are active in the crop production industry and a large share operate in the animal production and aquaculture industry. Professional, scientific and technical services hold the largest share of business in Strathmore but, unfortunately, Statistics Canada does not have any industries defined within this sector. In Chestermere, most businesses operate within the transportation and warehousing sector and 92.5% are active in the truck transportation industry within this sector.

Median income is relatively high in the CFWR region. The region has a slightly higher median income than Calgary and Alberta. Median income in Wheatland, Kneehill, and Strathmore is lower than the regional average and the median income in Calgary and Alberta. However, these regions are closing the gap as median income is growing substantially faster in these regions than in Calgary and Alberta. Household income shows a similar pattern and is, in the CFWR region as a whole, higher than household income in Calgary. Particularly Chestermere and Rocky View have considerably higher household incomes than the region and Calgary. In contrast, Strathmore and Kneehill have lower levels than the region and Calgary.

Agriculture is an important industry in the CFWR region, especially in Wheatland and Kneehill. Out of the total amount of farmland in the CFWR region, 40% is located in Wheatland, while Rocky View and Kneehill both have 30% of the total. 42% of the region's farms are located in Rocky View but the farms in Rocky View are the smallest in size. They are 24% smaller than the average farm in Alberta whereas farms in Wheatland and Kneehill are 35% and 6% larger. Moreover, gross farm receipts per acre in Wheatland and Kneehill are 57% and 47% higher than gross farm receipts per acre in Rocky View. An explanation for this difference is that farms in Wheatland and Kneehill are specialized in oilseed and grain farming (48% and 50% of all farms versus 29% in Rocky View). In addition, farms are bigger in these two counties and bigger farms are found to have higher profit margins. This explains why, with similar acreages of farmland available, Rocky View has a lower GDP in agriculture than Wheatland and Kneehill.

When it comes to housing costs, the CFWR region scores similar to Calgary and Alberta based on 2021 data. Median home values grew more in the CFWR region between 2011 and 2021 than the median home values in Calgary. However, home values in Calgary and the region are similar. Moreover, median shelter monthly costs for owned and rented homes in the CFWR region are similar to the costs in Calgary and Alberta. There are some differences within the region, with Kneehill and Wheatland having considerably lower shelter costs than Calgary, while Chestermere has higher shelter costs than Calgary; however, the region balances out to the similar levels as Calgary and the province.

Unemployment has strongly increased in the counties and cities within the CFWR region. However, this is a nationwide trend and has also been observed in Calgary and Alberta. Unemployment in the CFWR region did not increase more than in Calgary or Alberta and has consistently been lower than those two areas. Job vacancy data is less regionally detailed, but vacancy rates have increased substantially since 2011 in the Camrose-Drumheller region, which includes most of the CFWR region. Whereas vacancy rates in Calgary and Alberta increased and are now trending downwards, vacancy rates in the Camrose-Drumheller region have been trending around the peak level instead of decreasing. Labour force participation is at a similar level to both Calgary and the province, and these rates are considered high for developed economies.

Construction holds the largest share of employment in the CFWR region, followed by retail trade, and health care and social assistance. These two sectors did not show up in the top three in terms of GDP, but they are sectors that are traditionally labour-intensive. The employment data by sector shows that most employment in the region is located in sectors that do

not produce the highest GDP. Generally, in the sectors in which the region holds a large share of its employment, labour productivity is lower.

3. Regional Perspectives on Labour

3.1. ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

In addition to economic modelling and secondary research into the region's labour market, various engagement activities generated primary data regarding the perspectives of both employers and workforce participants. The engagement period for this project started in January 2024, concluding at the end of February of the same year.

3.1.1. OBJECTIVES, AUDIENCES, AND METHODS

Per the guidelines set out at the beginning of the study, the objectives of engagement, as well as supporting communications activities, were as follows:

1. Mobilize broad regional collaboration including municipalities, chambers, employment agencies, post secondaries, and school boards.
2. Develop communication channels and marketing materials that raise public awareness and participation in the labour market study, while mobilizing partners to participate in the development and implementation of a regional workforce strategy.
3. Keep impacted stakeholders informed about the project from planning to completion.

During the project initiation phase, Ballard and the project steering committee identified key stakeholder groups that would be targeted for engagement. Further deliberation and the development of the project plan led to the following list of targeted stakeholders:

- Project steering committee (PSC) members;
- Regional labour market participants;
- Regional business owners and operators; and
- Recommended business owners and operators.

Based on the project partners' requirements, the engagement process focused on the following data-gathering activities:

1. **Interviews with select business owners:** Interviews allowed for in-depth discovery of business needs and concerns regarding the labour market. They were conducted throughout the engagement period, allowing for thorough discussion surrounding industry-specific needs and expertise, as well as the values of the region's wider business community.
2. **Business owner/operator and labour market participant surveys:** Two surveys were administered to support this project, one to each of these broad audiences. Surveys allow for broad input from stakeholders, creating a localized data set to complement findings from secondary sources such as government publications. These surveys were promoted through various channels online and in print to ensure public awareness.
3. **Strategic Planning Workshop:** The session, focusing on the input of invited business representatives and PSC members, provided a format to review and reflect on findings from previous engagement activities. It also allowed for the refinement of emerging recommendations based on engagement data.

3.1.2. PROMOTION AND PARTICIPATION

A communication plan supported public awareness throughout the engagement period. Specific methods for the dissemination of engagement information included:

- Promotion on the Community Futures Wild Rose website;
- Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn posts on the accounts of project partners;
- Paid advertising on Facebook for the residents survey;
- Paid advertising on LinkedIn for the business survey;
- E-newsletters sent out by project partners;
- Three rounds of direct emails to local businesses; and
- Outreach and social media promotion through three community groups in the region.

Direct engagement with businesses was done to bolster our pool of business owner/operator feedback and provide their perspective on the labour market in their area. This was done by compiling their contact information and emailing surveys directly to their inboxes.

Contact lists were created by combining contact information provided by PSC members with information gathered using a B2B contact database software. This software enabled access to the contact information for a number of individuals working at businesses within the region. Additionally, it was able to filter for specific roles and company size so that we could communicate with relevant stakeholders capable of providing insight into labour challenges. Local business owners, management, and executive roles were targeted for this project.

These efforts ultimately resulted in the following engagement numbers:

- 163 completed surveys with various business owners and operators;
- 596 completed surveys with the region's residents; and
- 21 in-depth interviews with various employers in the region.

These engagement numbers correspond to approximately 1.2% of labour market participants⁴⁴ and roughly 3.8% of businesses in the CFWR region.⁴⁵ These numbers represent a strong participation rate, given the region's geographic size and the lower appetite for surveys since the pandemic. Furthermore, the geographic area to cover made the feasibility of in-person surveying and engaging (i.e., business visits) difficult and would have produced a bias towards population centres in the area.

Table 10 outlines how the pool of engagement participants corresponds with the current business count and job count in CFWR region.

Table 10: Surveyed Businesses and LMPs Compared to Regional Counts

Industry	Surveyed LMPs	Total Job Count (CFWR) ⁴⁵	Surveyed Businesses	Total Business Count (CFWR) ⁴⁶
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	54	2,787	16	223
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	19	1,880	2	63
Utilities	8	350	1	9
Construction	35	4,855	18	708
Manufacturing	18	2,750	8	137
Wholesale trade	2	1,752	0	127
Retail trade	31	4,468	25	393
Transportation and warehousing	27	2,925	6	364
Information and cultural industries	9	1,263	2	35
Finance and insurance	39	469	6	102
Real estate and rental and leasing	5	3,668	3	153
Professional, scientific and technical services	28	2,291	5	620
Management of companies and enterprises	4	1,692	0	15
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	20	4,350	0	199
Educational services	56	1,366	3	46
Health care and social assistance	74	1,772	12	354
Arts, entertainment and recreation	17	2,206	14	58
Accommodation and food services	11	1,920	14	200
Other services (except public administration)	71	2,787	23	298
Public administration	30	1,880	1	10
Unspecified	38	N/A	4	N/A
TOTAL	596	47,492	163	4,382

3.1.3. ENSURING DATA ACCURACY

Due to the widespread paid promotion of the surveys, as well as the inclusion of a prize incentive, there was a high risk of spam responses. Therefore, survey responses were submitted to a set of assessment criteria used to eliminate likely spam. Criteria included the following:

- Time to complete the survey, with response times under a minute removed.
- Excessive repetition of duplicate IP addresses.
- Submission from a foreign IP address.

3.2. RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT AND PERSPECTIVES

Residents participating in the labour market who were also living in the CFWR region were asked to fill out a survey. The questions were related to residents' experiences working in the region, level of education, preferences on employment conditions, factors influencing their decisions on where to work and live, and what resources would best support them working in the region. These questions were asked to better understand the characteristics of the labour supply for the region and ultimately inform the recommendations to attract and retain labour.

⁴⁵ Statistics Canada: Calculated based on 2021 Census and converted to monthly data using Labour Force Characteristics data set

⁴⁶ Statistics Canada: Business counts from Canadian Business Counts, with employees, census metropolitan areas and census subdivisions, Dec. 2023

3.2.1. RESIDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Section Insights

The largest barriers to employment were lack of jobs, high cost of living, and insufficient housing options.

Most residents in the CFWR region have resided in their community for a long time, with 74.2% of respondents saying they have lived in their community for 6 or more years, as seen in **Error! Reference source not found.** The high proportion of longer-term residents indicates that residents are content with their living situation and likely have a desire to remain in the community.

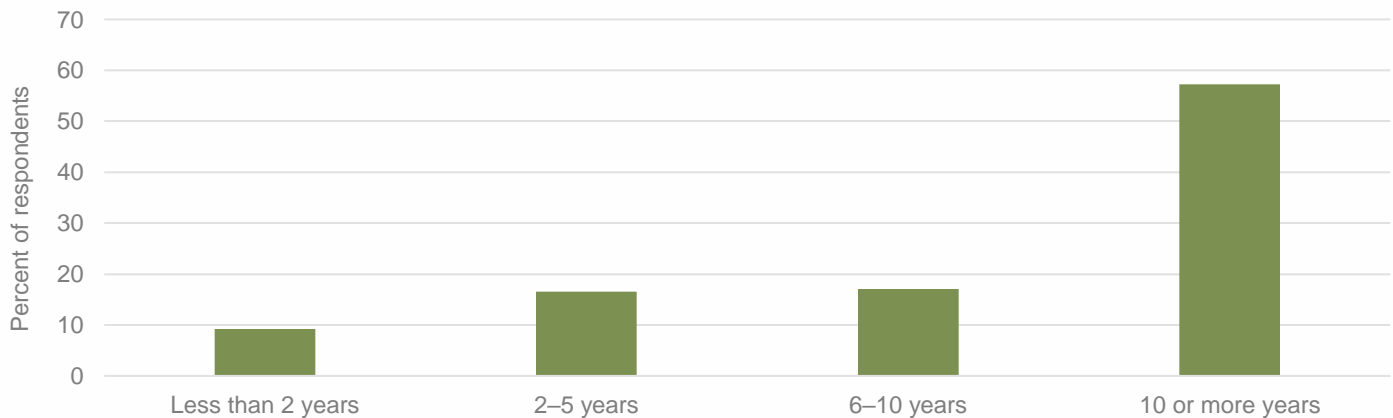


Figure 20: How long have you lived in your community?⁴⁷

Throughout all different ages, residents were most likely to have lived 10 years or more in their community. However, both younger and older age groups were more likely to be longer term residents than middle aged groups. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows a weak U-relationship between age and long-term residency in a community. That is, both younger aged respondents and older aged respondents were living in their community for 10 or more years at a higher rate, whereas less of those in middle age groups were living in their community for 10 or more years. The higher proportion of younger age groups being long-term residents suggests that individuals that grew up in the community are likely to remain there for the first few years of entering the working population as they learn to navigate the labour market. As age increased, respondents were less likely to be a long-term resident, suggesting a larger proportion of middle-aged workers move to the region as younger adults. The fact that a higher share of older workers are long-term residents suggests that those who move into the communities as young adults end up staying as long-term residents.

⁴⁷ Residents Survey

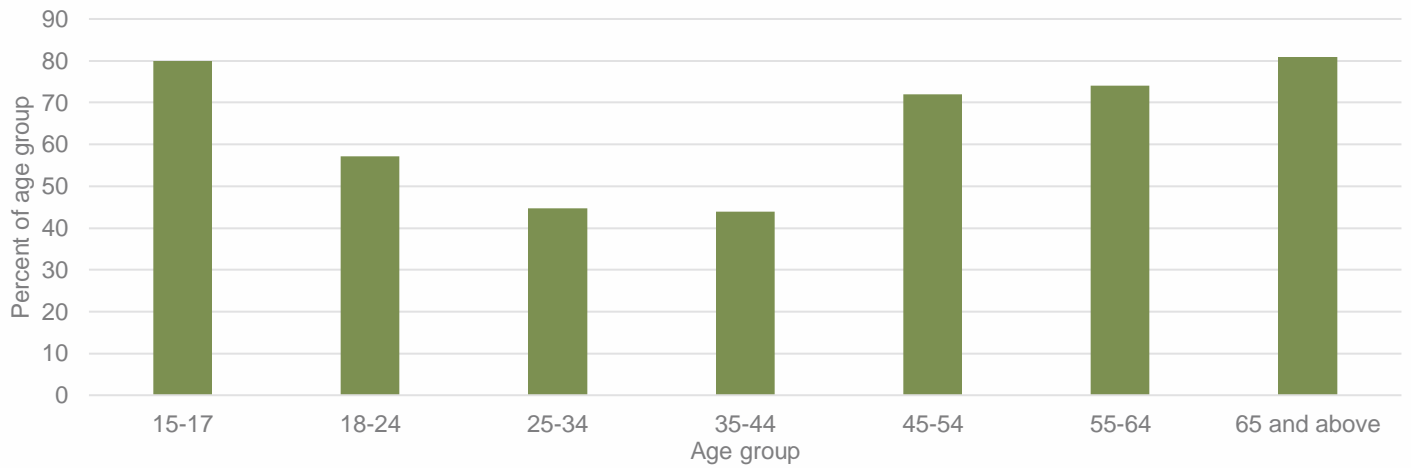


Figure 21: Percent of given age group living in their community for 10 or more years.⁴⁸

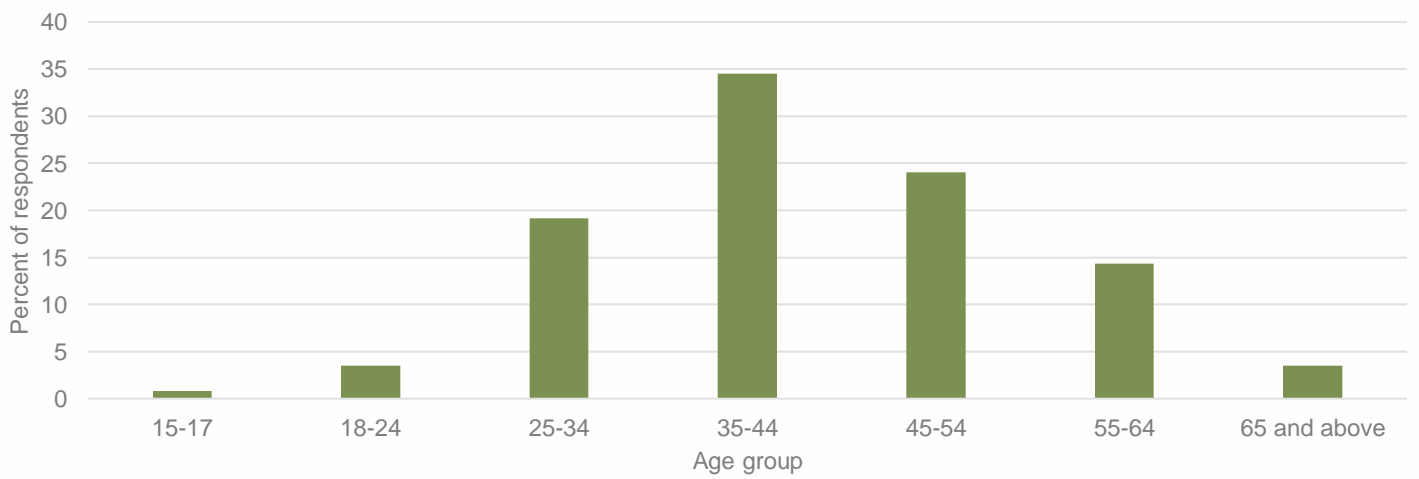


Figure 22: What is your age?⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Residents Survey

⁴⁹ Residents Survey

3.2.2. FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYMENT

Amongst survey respondents, the unemployment rate was 10.1%. When breaking down the number by industry, the unemployment rate ranges from 0% to 30% depending on the industry, as shown in Figure 23. A total of six industries had a 0% unemployment rate, these included utilities; wholesale trade; real estate, rental, and leasing; management of companies and enterprises; educational services; and arts, entertainment, and recreation.

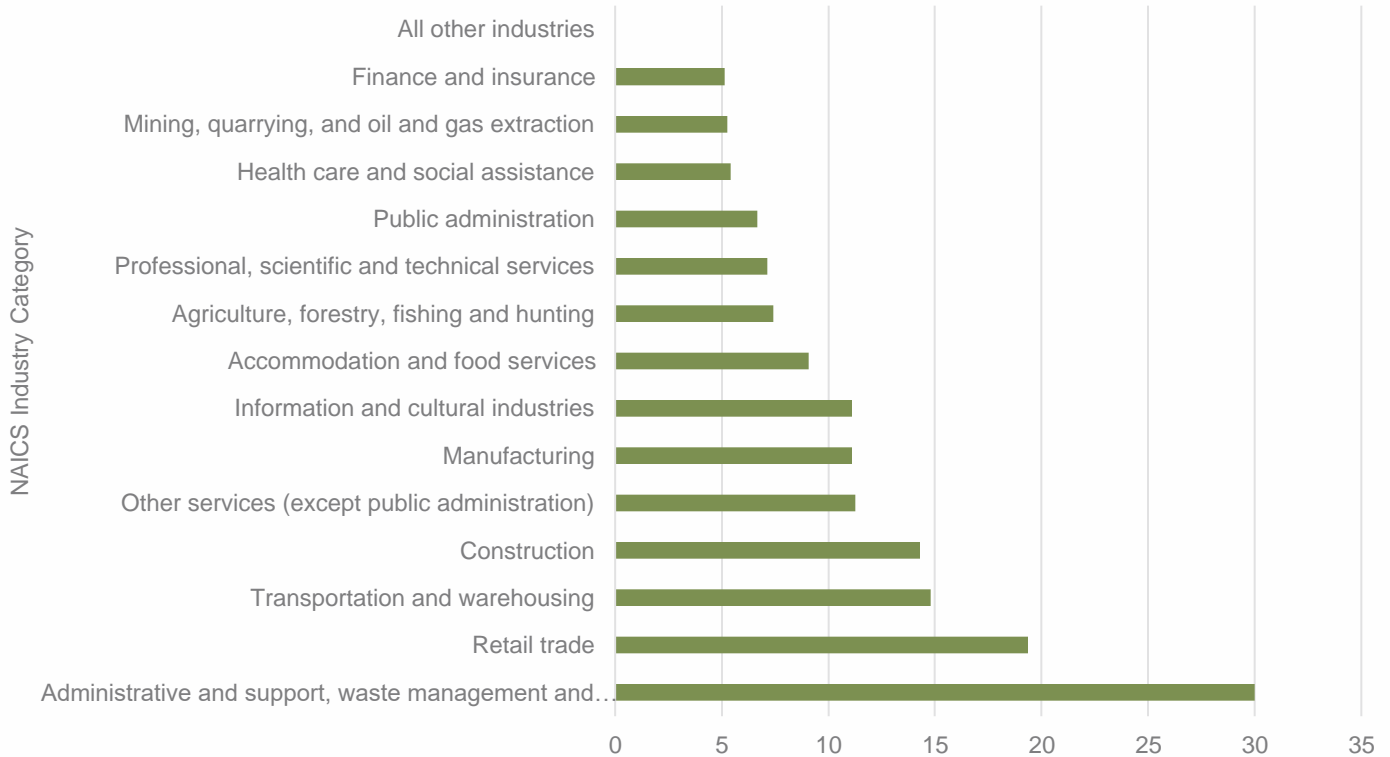


Figure 23: Unemployment rate by industry⁵⁰

It is important to note that the low reported rate may not necessarily reflect the industry's labour market performance. If the industry represents a small share of total employment in the region, then there will be a significantly smaller group of individuals looking for work who have previously worked in that industry. Indeed, of the six industries reporting a 0% unemployment rate, three had 5 or fewer respondents working in that industry (these include wholesale trade; real estate, rental, and leasing; and management of companies and enterprises).

A large share of residents who are unemployed have been looking for work for 0 to 3 months (43.3%). However, a sizeable 30% have also been looking for work for 7 or more months. This might indicate some structural barriers to employment for the region, such as a discrepancy in skills being offered by residents and skills being demanded by employers. When residents who were looking for work were asked to manually enter what challenges they faced in finding work, the most common responses included:

- Overqualified for listed jobs
- Not much work available
- Insufficient pay
- Employers not very flexible with job hours

⁵⁰ Residents Survey

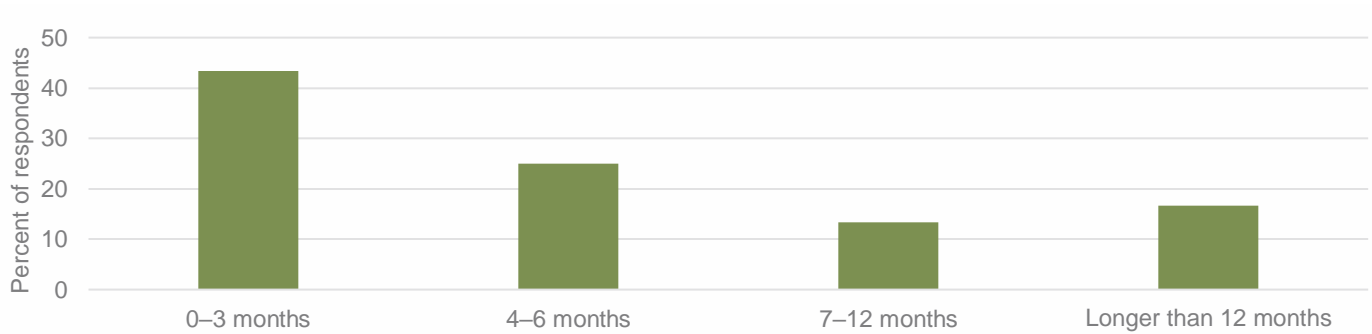


Figure 24: How long have you been looking for work?⁵¹

Figure 25 shows that a large share of residents felt that there were structural barriers to employment in the region. Over half of the residents (58.2%), believed that there was a lack of jobs in the region. 50.7% and 45.2% of residents perceived a high cost of living, and insufficient housing options as barriers to employment, respectively.

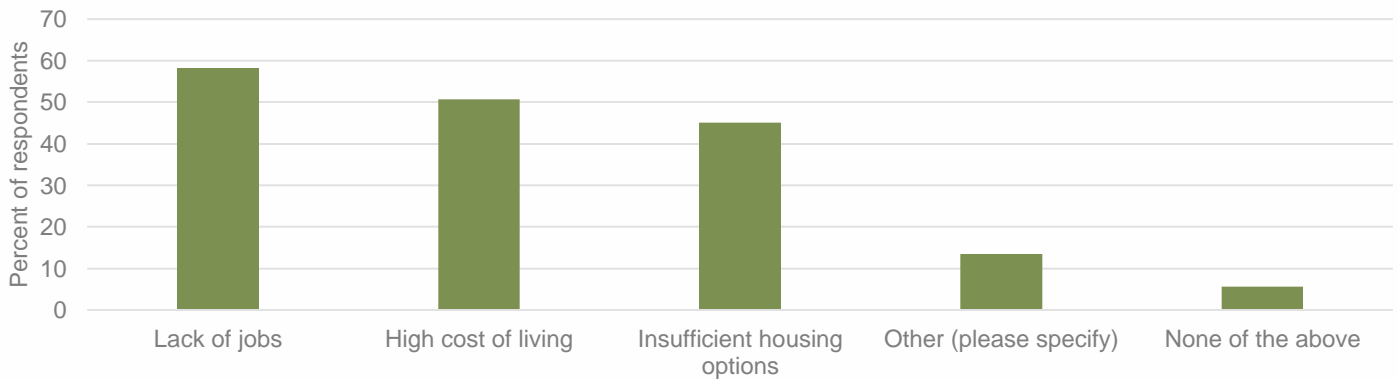


Figure 25: In your opinion, what are the barriers to employment in the region?⁵²

When considering both the challenges residents face when looking for work, and the barriers to employment they perceive to exist for the region, the general perception seems to be a combination of both structural and non-structural issues surrounding employment. A lack of available work, and unfavourable employment conditions (wages, flexibility, etc.), though important to address, tend to be challenges that depend on current macroeconomic or market conditions, which are subject to fluctuations from time to time. On the other hand, high cost of living, insufficient housing options, and perceived overqualification for available jobs are structural issues that will need to be actively addressed to support the region’s labour force.

⁵¹ Resident Survey

⁵² Resident Survey

3.2.3. CONSIDERATIONS FOR LIVING AND WORKING IN THE REGION

Section Insights

A competitive salary and work flexibility were stated to be the most important factors when looking for work.

Residents were also asked to rank, in order of importance, which characteristics they find important when looking at potential employers and when choosing where to live (see Table 11 and Table 12). For both questions, residents ranked their most important characteristic as 1 and the least important as 5. In the two figures, the lower the weighted average of importance, the more often this characteristic was ranked as the most important one. On average, respondents ranked a “competitive salary” and “work flexibility” as their top two important characteristics when looking at potential employers. While these two characteristics are the most important to residents, job seekers state that they are finding it difficult to find available jobs that meet these expectations.

Table 11: Please rank in order of importance the characteristics you consider when looking at potential employers.⁵³

Rank	Characteristics
1	Competitive salary
2	Work flexibility (i.e. hours, work from home, etc.)
3	Benefits
4	Company reputation and stability
5	Professional development and career growth

Despite this, job opportunities and conditions may not be the driving force for individuals deciding where to reside. Compared to the rest of the characteristics which influence where residents want to live, “job opportunities” was ranked, on average, fourth most important out of the five different characteristics. The most important factor was that the location was a “good place for family”. Although 45.2% of respondents said that insufficient housing options were a barrier to employment (Figure 25), “housing prices” was ranked only third most important when choosing where to live.

Table 12: Please rank in order of importance the characteristics you consider when choosing where you want to live.⁵⁴

Rank	Characteristics
1	Good place for family
2	Location
3	Housing prices
4	Job opportunities
5	Strong community environment

⁵³ Residents Survey, Ballad Calculations

⁵⁴ Residents Survey, Ballad Calculations

3.2.4. IDEAS FOR AND AWARENESS OF SUPPORT OPTIONS

Section Insights

- More available housing, local post-secondary education options, and skills and employment training would assist people with getting into the labour market.
- Resources that would assist with accessing employment include a list of current job opportunities, access to training, and a list of community resources that provide employment support.
- 75% respondents were not familiar with local employment services or resources.
- Resources that would assist with accessing employment include a list of current job opportunities, access to training, and a list of community resources that provide employment support.

When asked what would help to get more people into the labour market, a significant share of survey respondents selected “more available housing” (58.2%), “local post-secondary education options” (50.7%), and “local skills and employment training” (45.2%), as shown in Figure 26. Each of these options provide solutions to some of the structural challenges and barriers to finding employment identified above. Although the question asks how more people could enter the labour market, and not necessarily how more people could gain employment, it follows that the challenges and barriers faced by those in the labour market who are struggling to find work are similar to the challenges and barriers that prevent some individuals from entering the labour market at all.

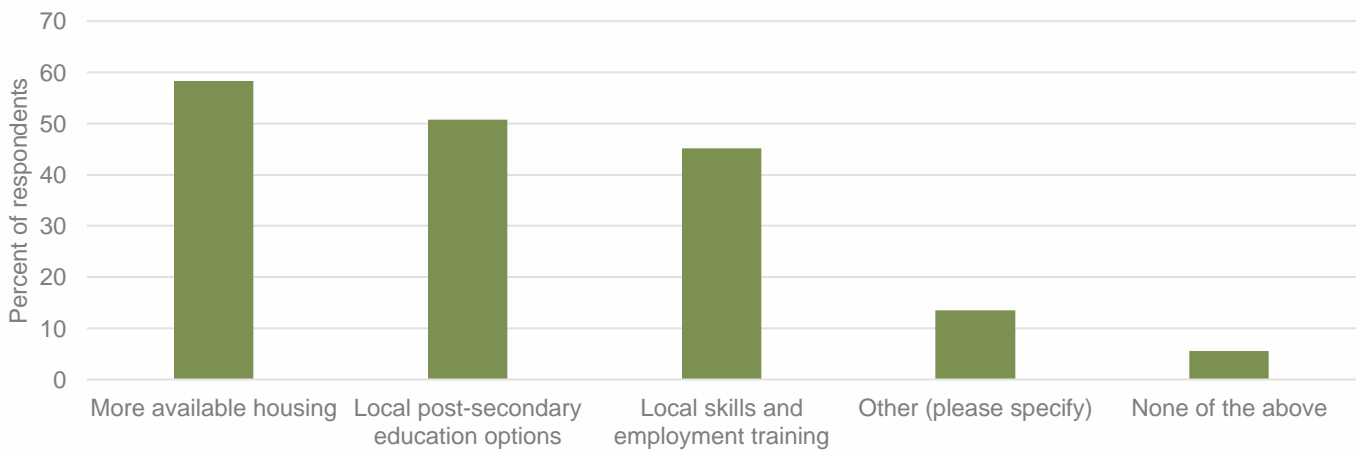


Figure 26: In your opinion, what would help to get more people into the labour market?⁵⁵

Although all listed resources gained a substantial share of responses, when residents were asked what resources would be valuable to assist people with accessing employment opportunities, an overwhelming majority (78.0%) selected “a list of current job opportunities in the region”. Combined with the fact that many respondents looking for work identified a lack of jobs as a challenge to finding employment, there seems to be a lack of awareness of job vacancy information for the region.

⁵⁵ Residents Survey, Ballad calculations

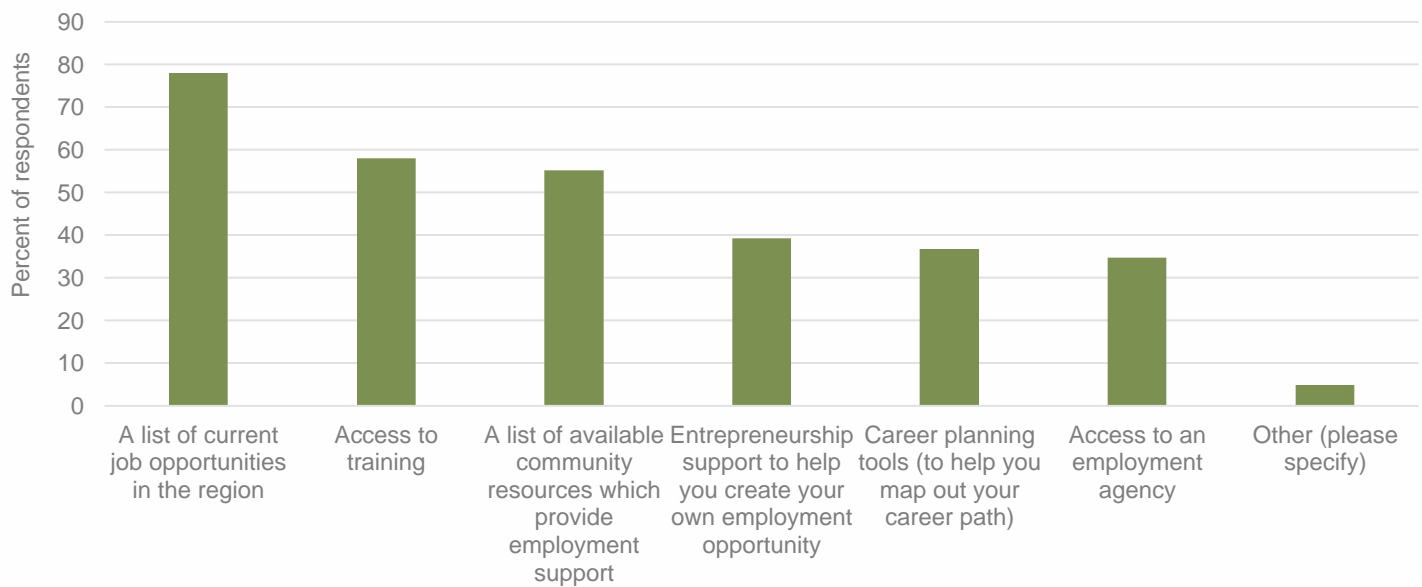


Figure 27: What resources do you think would be valuable to assist people with accessing employment opportunities? ⁵⁶

Although residents seem to be interested in resources to help with employment, there is a general lack of awareness of the resources available in the community. When asked if they were familiar with any employment offices or resources in their community, 74.8% of respondents said they were not familiar. Respondents that answered “yes” were then asked to manually enter the names the resources they knew. The responses in order of popularity were:

- Prospect Human Services (93 mentions)
- Wheatland Employment Services (12 mentions)
- Community Futures (7 mentions)
- Job Fairs (3 mentions)
- Kneehill Adult Services (2 mentions)

3.3. EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND PERSPECTIVES

Employers operating businesses in the CFWR region were also asked to complete the Business Survey. These questions were related to perspectives on operating a business in the region, finding and retaining employees in the region, and what resources would best support them finding and retaining employees in the region. These questions were asked to better understand the characteristics of the labour supply for the region and ultimately inform the recommendations to attract and retain labour.

3.3.1. SURVEYED BUSINESSES’ PROFILE

As Figure 28 shows, most businesses in the region have been operating there for a long period of time. Almost half (47.8%) of participating businesses have been operating for at least 11 years. However, a significant share has been operating for a short period of time, with 37.7% stating that they have only been operating between 0 to 5 years.

⁵⁶ Residents Survey, Ballad calculations

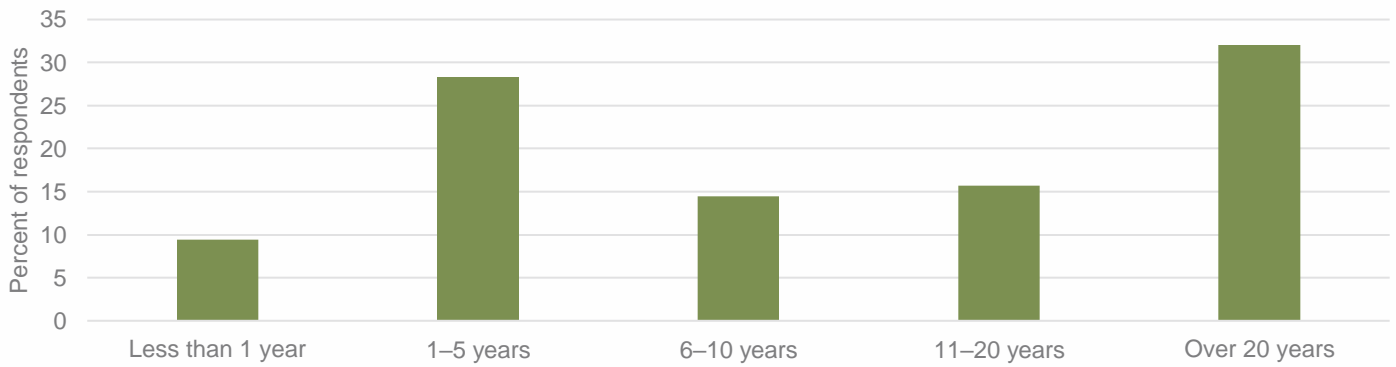


Figure 28: For how many years has your business been operating?⁵⁷

3.3.2. CHALLENGES WITH LABOUR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Section Insights

- General skilled labour is the largest and hardest category to fill.
- The biggest challenges to hiring are a lack of skilled labour and a lack of applicants.
- Housing is the largest issue for retaining employees that is within the stakeholders' scope.

As displayed in Figure 29, a large majority of business respondents (61.8%) do not usually experience notable levels of job vacancies. Those who do experience notable levels of job vacancies reported “labour” most frequently when asked which occupational role(s) were difficult to hire, as shown in Figure 30. Breaking down the responses further in Figure 31, it seems that the higher the job vacancies, the more distributed the vacancies are across the different occupational roles. Figure 31 groups responses by the level of vacancies the business is experiencing along the vertical axis. The percent of businesses in that group having difficulty hiring a given occupational role is then graphed on the horizontal axis. Most businesses that are experiencing an average of 10% vacancies selected “labour” and “professional” roles as difficult to hire, with very few businesses in the 10% vacancies range selecting any other occupational role. However, as the level of vacancies increase, businesses select a range of different roles as difficult to hire. This pattern indicates that businesses experiencing higher job vacancies are finding it difficult to hire many different occupational roles.

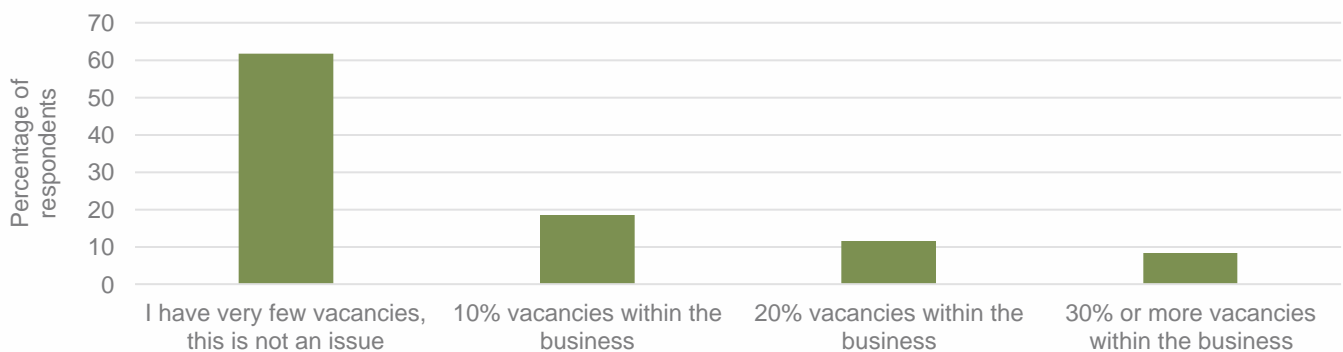


Figure 29: On average, what level of staff vacancies does your business usually experience?⁵⁸

Businesses were also asked to describe why the selected occupational roles(s) are difficult to hire by manually entering their response. The most common answers were:

⁵⁷ Residents Survey, Ballard calculations

⁵⁸ Business Survey, Ballard calculations

- Lack of skilled labour
- Finding workers to do hard work
- Seasonal

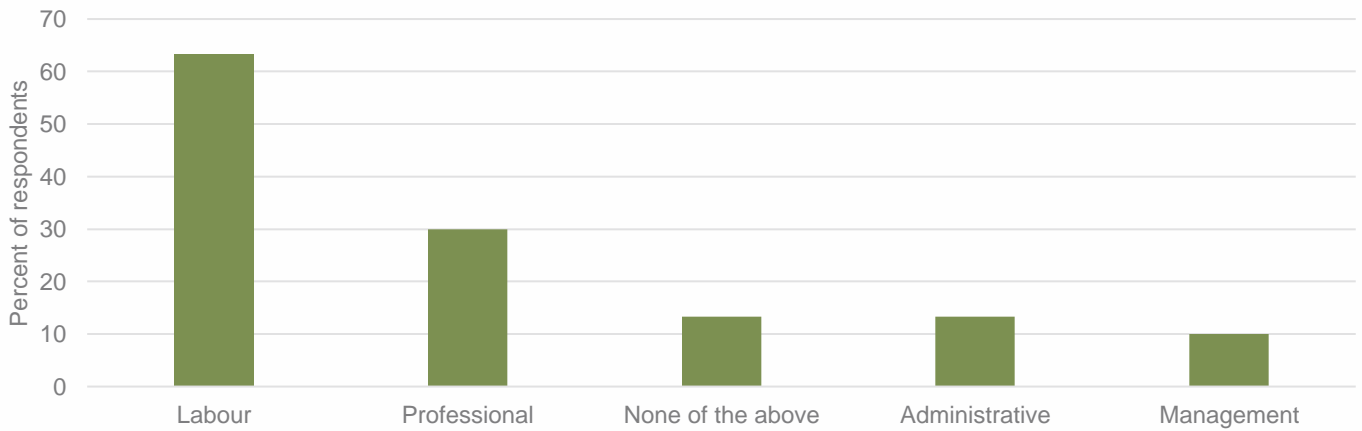


Figure 30: For which occupational roles do you have difficulty hiring?⁵⁹

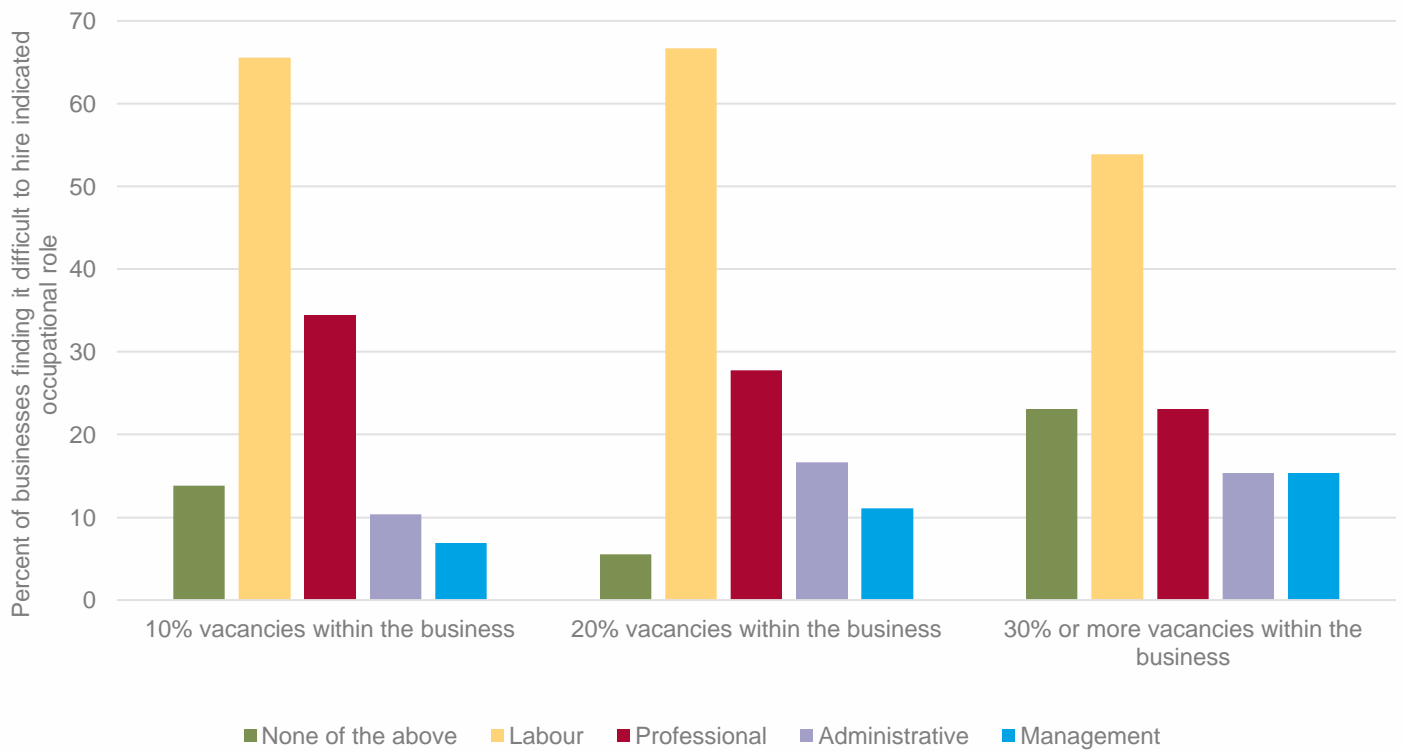


Figure 31: The type of occupational role that is difficult to hire based on level of vacancy⁶⁰

53.7% of respondents said that attracting employees is a problem, while 46.3% said it was not a challenge. For those finding it a challenge, Figure 32 shows that the most common challenges faced when hiring are “lack of skills qualifications in

⁵⁹ Business Survey, Ballad calculations

⁶⁰ Business Survey, Ballad calculations

applicants” (60.8%), “other” (43.0%), and “public transportation is a challenge” (24.1%). Those who selected other were asked to specify challenges they faced when hiring. The most common responses were:

- Seasonal
- Salary too low
- Lack of work ethic
- Lack of applicants

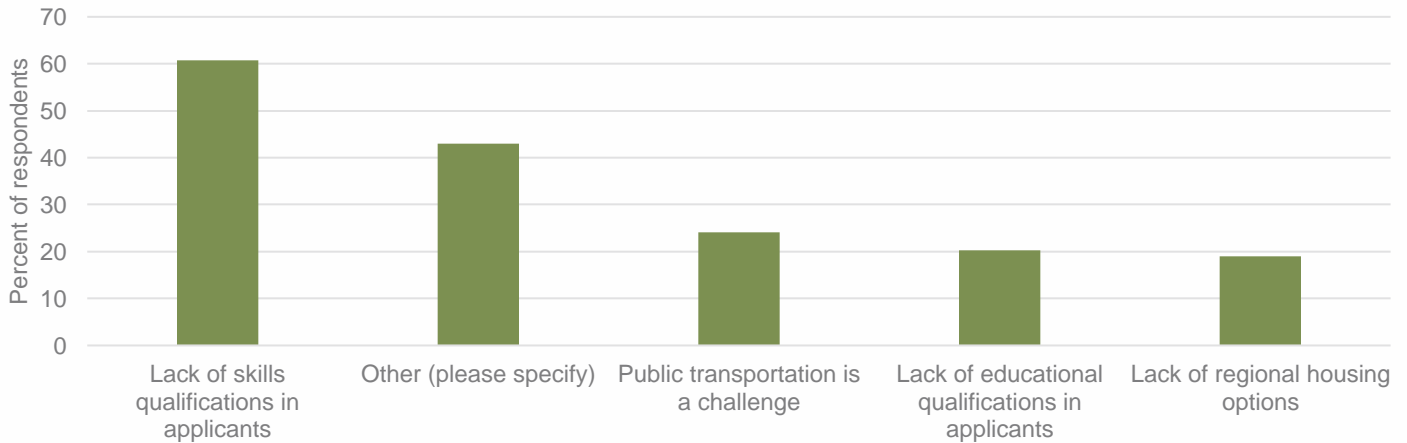


Figure 32: What challenges do you face when hiring?⁶¹

Unlike attracting employees, retaining employees seems to be less of an issue. 38.8% of business respondents said that retaining employees was a challenge, while 61.2% of respondents said it was not an issue. This suggests that once employees have entered the region and found a job, they are likely to stay. This is supported by the fact that many residents were long-term residents, especially those at ages typically associated with being at a mid-level position.

Those facing retention challenges selected “other” (60%), “other local employers attracting employees with higher wages” (41.8), and “lack of regional housing options” (23.6%) most frequently, as seen in Figure 33. Those who selected “other” were asked to manually enter the challenges they face. The most common responses were:

- Seasonal
- Not motivated
- Consistent work hours not available
- Jobs are temporary and people move on

⁶¹ Business survey, Ballad calculations

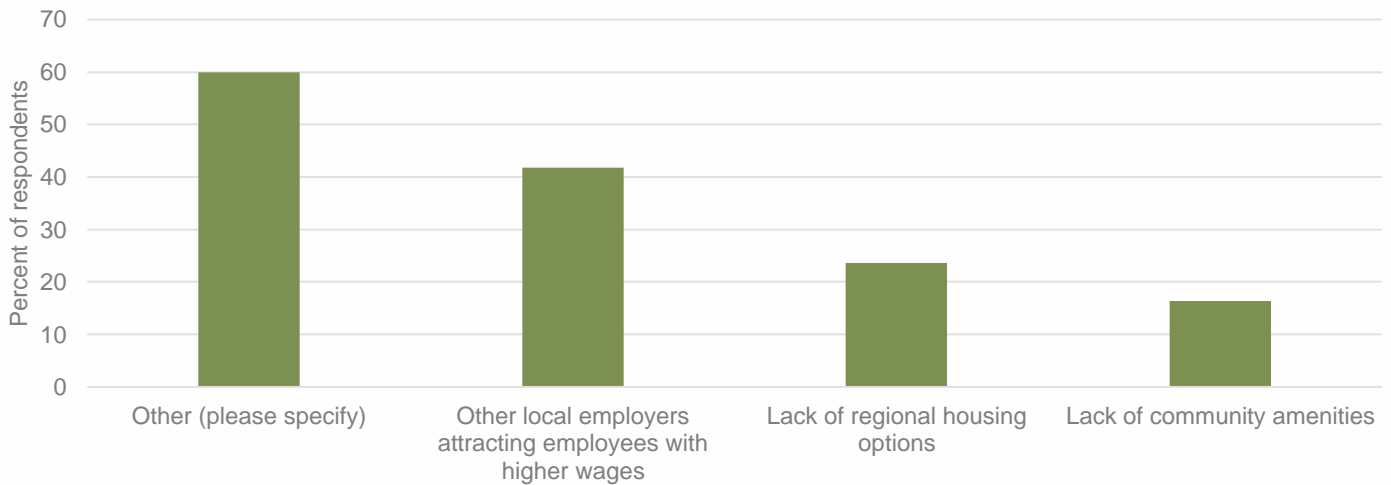


Figure 33: What challenges do you face when retaining employees? ⁶²

3.3.3. CONSIDERATIONS FOR OPERATING A BUSINESS IN THE REGION

97.1% of respondents believe they will continue operating their business in their community for the foreseeable future. When asked to manually enter what advantages are contributing to their decision to continue operating in their current location, the most common responses were:

- Established business
- Good location
- Great community
- Cheaper commercial rent
- Close to Calgary supply chain

3.3.4. AWARENESS AND IDEAS FOR BUSINESS SUPPORTS AND PROGRAMS

Section Insights

- 64% of employers have not had any business supports. Grants, business services, and employment programs were used by 20%, 15%, and 7% of businesses, respectively.
- 87% of employers do not hire through an employment immigration program and these employers are also undecided as to whether they would consider participating.

When businesses were asked if the training programs that they require for their workforce are easy to access and provide, 73.6% said yes, while the remaining 26.4% said no. Even so, training employment programs were one of the most common responses when asked to manually enter business supports that they felt might be helpful to be provided by their municipality or other public entities. In order of most popular responses, businesses identified the following supports:

1. Grants/ start-up capital
2. Operational help/business coaching
3. Training employment programs

⁶² Business Survey, Ballad calculations

4. Housing

Engagement with available programs, supports, and resources is relatively limited in the region. 65.4% of respondents said they used none of the listed business supports seen in Figure 34.

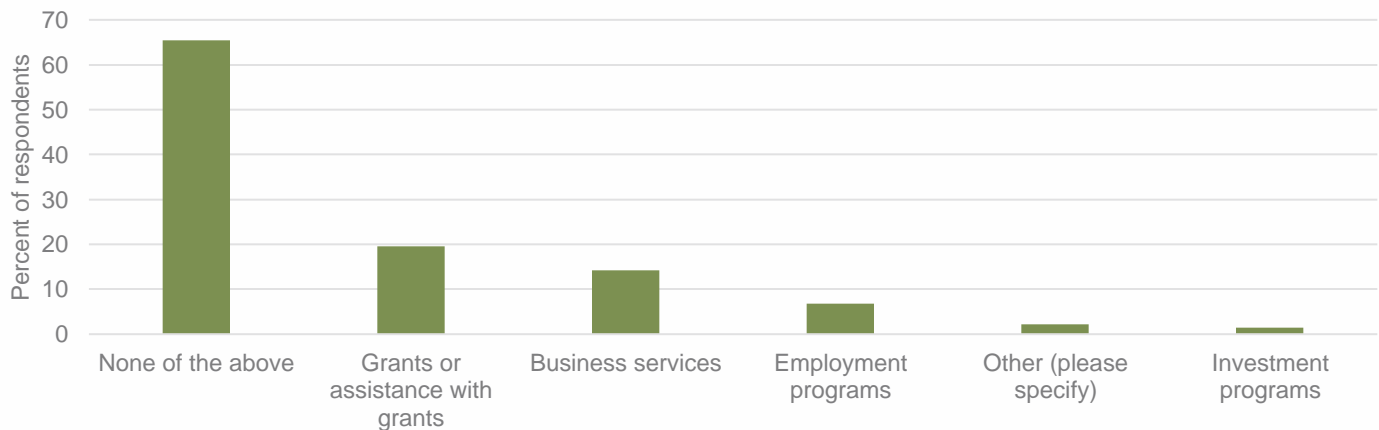


Figure 34: Have you had any of the following business supports from the municipality or other government entities?⁶³

Moreover, 87.9% of respondents said they do not hire through immigration programs and only 12.1% do hire through these programs. Of those who do not, 43.1% said they would consider using immigration programs in the future to assist with any labour challenges. 56.9% said they would not consider it. The reluctance to use immigration programs may have multiple explanations, one being that there is a knowledge gap on the process behind programs, or the available programs being offered by different government agencies.

Businesses were also asked to identify the local resources and partners offering assistance with labour recruitment with which they are familiar. Businesses were asked to manually enter known resources as a list of the partners was not provided. This was done intentionally to learn how many businesses were able to recall resources in their community rather than recognize from a list given to them. Of the 163 survey respondents, only 26 responded to this question, mentioning the following resources:

- Prospect Human Services (8 mentions)
- Community Futures (4 mentions)
- Kneehill Learning Society (1 mention)
- Trochu Rural Renewal (1 mention)

⁶³ Business Survey, Ballad calculations

3.3.5. DIRECT EMPLOYER INTERVIEWS

Section Insights

- Approximately 80% of the regional workforce is general/skilled labour.
- Recruiting for general/skilled labour positions poses the greatest challenge.
- Most employers not utilizing foreign worker programs expressed openness to the idea but require clearer insights into their workings.
- Most employers stated that they were not aware of any labour or business support services from public entities or municipalities.
- A lack of available and affordable housing is the largest constraint in hiring or attracting employees.

In addition to conducting a comprehensive business survey, direct phone interviews were held with 21 employers across various industries within the region. While this sample size was smaller in comparison, it was pivotal to engage directly with employers to get further insights and gauge their sentiments effectively, thereby adding depth to our understanding.

The employers interviewed varied in size, with employee counts ranging from 2 to 313, representing industries such as retail, agriculture, construction, and manufacturing. On average, these businesses had been operating in the region for approximately 22 years. This diverse representation provided a robust overview of the regional labour landscape.

From these discussions, it was revealed that 80% of employees held general/skilled labour positions, while the remaining 20% occupied professional/administrative roles. General/skilled labour positions were considered to be any position that required manual or skilled work. Professional/administrative positions were considered to be any office work that ranged from administrative to management and could work on or off site. Notably, 89% of the workforce was employed full-time, indicating a strong emphasis on established positions within the labour force.

Of the 21 employers interviewed, 18 acknowledged facing medium to high levels of labour challenges. Predominant issues cited included difficulty in finding qualified local candidates and retaining skilled employees. These challenges were primarily associated with general/skilled positions, while professional/administrative roles were not a large concern.

In response to addressing these labour shortages, the prospect of utilizing foreign worker programs was discussed. However, despite the prevalent challenges, 15 of the 18 employers with challenges said that they do not use foreign worker programs, and of those 10 were open to using them. Their hesitancy predominantly stemmed from a lack of understanding regarding program intricacies and how to implement such a process.

Examining external resources available to businesses, it was noted that while private solutions for various operational facets exist, such as private lending for capital needs or companies that improve marketing and sales, limited options cater specifically to acquiring general/skilled employees. Although recruiting firms are accessible, their focus primarily revolves around professional roles, often accompanied by prohibitive fees. Consequently, smaller businesses or those with lower-wage positions find these services financially unviable.

Just as was seen in the business survey, when directly asked, 15 of the interviewed employers were not aware of any regional public supports, either for labour or any other operational needs. While a few cited organizations such as Prospect Human Services and Community Futures, the overall awareness remained very low. They also stated that if assistance was available, the most valuable service public organizations could provide was assistance with recruitment.

Finally, beyond internal operational constraints, external factors significantly influenced employers' ability to attract and retain employees. The foremost concern identified was the scarcity of available and affordable housing in the region, highlighted by a significant proportion of employers. Inadequate amenities were cited as a secondary factor, but only by a few employers.

4. Key Themes and Solutions

The comprehensive overview of the economy of the region and the engagement findings show that there are challenges in CFWR's labour market. The issues affecting the national labour market are also felt in the CFWR region, but the region has a few unique challenges of its own.

The economic analysis revealed that the region has a shortage of general and skilled labour and that this deficit will likely grow in the next years. The region's economy, both in terms of GDP generation and employment, is heavily concentrated in labour-intensive sectors. Vacancy rates are already higher in the region than in Calgary and the province but the region's current population is overqualified to fill many of its current and future jobs.

Employer and resident interactions corroborated several of the trends observed in the economic data. Numerous residents expressed frustration with their job search, attributing their difficulties to feeling overqualified for available positions. Conversely, businesses reported challenges in filling vacancies, noting that many applicants lack the necessary qualifications. Notably, direct engagement revealed crucial insights that extended beyond the scope of the economic data, shedding light on significant concerns such as a shortage of housing, specific operational requirements for businesses, and a lack of awareness regarding regional support services.

The employer and resident engagements confirmed several of the findings found in the economic data. Many residents voiced that they were experiencing trouble finding employment because they feel that they are overqualified. In contrast, many businesses said that they have trouble filling their vacancies and that many applicants are not qualified to fill their vacancy. Key insights from direct engagement, that couldn't be derived from the economic data, included an emphasis on a lack of housing, specific business operational needs, and an unawareness of regional supports.

A number of themes arose during the research and engagement that provide an overview of the challenges in the labour market in the CFWR region. Within each of these themes, specific solutions have been formulated to address the challenges. The themes are:

1. Fulfilling General Labour Needs
2. Fulfilling Skilled Labour Needs
3. Available and Affordable Housing
4. Training for small employers without HR resources
5. Stakeholder Labour Services Engagement
6. Regional Recruitment

The recommended solutions provided within each theme were assigned priority levels and they were measured with the following parameters:

High Priority

- Has the highest impact on addressing employment gaps.
- High return on investment.
- Foundational initiative.
- Cost can vary depending on initial investment and ongoing requirements.

Medium Priority

- Has a good impact on addressing employment gaps.
- Good return on investment.
- Good initiative.
- Cost would be in the low to medium range.

Low Priority

- Has a small impact on addressing employment gaps.
- Small return on investment.
- Moderate initiative.
- Costs would be in a low range.

The following sections will discuss each of these themes in greater detail, providing a discussion of the challenges each theme represents and the relevant recommended solutions.

4.1. FULFILLING GENERAL LABOUR NEEDS

General labour and skilled labour make up approximately 80% of the labour demand in the region and filling general labour is a significant challenge for employers. This is also supported by the demographic and economic assessment. General labour generally does not require an apprenticeship, trade, or college diploma and can include jobs such as warehouse workers, cashiers, and manufacturing employees. Even though a large share of the region's labour demand is general skilled labour, the regional population is relatively highly educated with 51% of the population having some type of apprenticeship, trade, college, non-university certificate, diploma, or degree. With a highly skilled and educated population, it could pose a conflict for recruiting general labour, as those candidates will not likely apply for general labour jobs.

Employers are facing considerable challenges in filling these vacant positions, largely attributed to several factors: inadequate compensation for general labor, a deficit in basic skill sets among candidates, the seasonal nature of certain jobs, and a shortage of applicants overall. To assist with the gaps in general labour, leveraging the Rural Renewal Stream is recommended.

87% of employers in the region do not use immigration employment programs; however, as identified, there is a shortage of general labour in the region. When asked about participating in the program, the response was mixed. The main reason for the mixed response is that many employers do not understand how the program works or that it appears to be too complicated.

The Rural Renewal Stream supports the attraction and retention of newcomers to rural Alberta through a community-driven approach that supports local economic development needs and growth. Municipalities must first seek to become designated by submitting an application that outlines how they will carry out their responsibilities if they become a designated community. To qualify for the program, a community needs to have a population of less than 100,000 and for those that would like to do it as a partnership, the partner communities need to be in the same economic region. The application requires the community to identify how they intend to work with local employers that have continuous (minimum of 12 months, full-time, non-seasonal) jobs that need to be filled through international recruitment; plans for settlement and integration needs; as well as any additional criteria (optional) to recruit foreign nationals (e.g. occupational eligibility); their preparedness for responding to enquiries about their approach; and other community-specific economic development plans that affect their capacity. Once designated, the second step is for communities to work with local employers to recruit temporary foreign workers to meet labour needs and provide endorsement candidate letters to selected candidates. Candidates with endorsement letters can apply to the AAIP portal. There is no cost for municipalities to participate in the Rural Renewal Stream, but there would be financial implications for municipalities to consider, such as the cost of staff needed for operation and administration.

Currently, there are 34 communities that have received Rural Renewal designation since the program began in May of 2022. These include single municipalities, multi-municipal partnerships, and economic development alliances. The Town of Trochu received designation in September of 2022 and includes the Village of Acme, the Town of Three Hills, and the Village of Linden⁶⁴. Under the existing regulations, the City of Chestermere and Rocky View County cannot participate in the program as they fall within the catchment of the Calgary Metropolitan Area.

The program provides mutual benefits by facilitating the relocation and integration of immigrants into Canada while bolstering the region's workforce additional general labor. Despite potential concerns surrounding foreign worker programs, it's important

⁶⁴ [Rural Renewal Stream – Community Designation \(Government of Alberta\)](#)

to recognize that numerous agricultural employers in the region have successfully utilized such programs for years to address their general labour needs. These employers include greenhouses, feedlots, and agriculture manufacturing.

Stringent government regulations exist to safeguard foreign workers, holding employers accountable for adhering to contractual agreements and preventing any form of exploitation. Newly contracted foreign employees are obligated to remain with their designated employer for the contract's duration, or they may risk being required to leave the county. Similarly, existing temporary foreign workers seeking a contract renewal through the Rural Renewal Stream must demonstrate a consistent work history to pursue residency, ensuring stability within the workforce.

Moreover, studies highlight immigrants' willingness to accept lower wages upon entering the labour market, rendering them valuable additions to the general labour force. Extensive economic research indicates minimal impact on the wages of residents due to the presence of skilled immigrants.⁶⁵ Immigrants tend to occupy different occupational niches than local workers, thus minimizing displacement concerns.⁶⁶ Moreover, studies highlight immigrants' willingness to accept lower wages upon entering the labour market, rendering them valuable additions to the general labour force.⁶⁷

With the region spanning two counties and encompassing numerous towns and villages eligible for participation, there are diverse employers that differ in size, industry, and specific labour requirements. Centralizing the program management through a singular partner or organization would be a highly effective solution.

Solution #1: Participate in the Rural Renewal Stream	
Objective:	Supplement the supply of general labour in the region
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities experiencing general labour shortages should participate in the province's Rural Renewal Stream to supplement this labour supply. • This program can provide candidates for both General Labour and Skilled Labour needs.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities – Public Partners

Solution #2: Centralize regional collaboration for the Rural Renewal Stream	
Objective:	Streamline Rural Renewal collaboration and administrative processes through one organization to consolidate efforts and opportunities.
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision one regional partner as the operating organization for the program. Such consolidation streamlines administrative processes across partners, alleviating burdens and ensuring equitable access for municipalities with limited resources to allocate towards the program. • Due to the administrative requirements of the program, at least one full time staff would be required to manage it.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Priority

⁶⁵ [The Effects of Immigration on the Labour Market Outcomes of Less-skilled Natives; The Effect of Migration on Wages: Evidence from a Natural Experiment; The Impact of Immigrants on Host Country Wages, Employment and Growth.](#)

⁶⁶ [Immigrants' Complementarities and Native Wages: Evidence from California.](#)

⁶⁷ [The Impact of Immigration on Unemployment and Wages in the United States: Evidence from Seven States.](#)

Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities – Public Partners
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4.2. FULFILLING SKILLED LABOUR NEEDS

Skilled labour is also in high demand in the CFWR region. 8 out of 10 jobs in the region are general and skilled labour, but only 11% of the population possesses an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma. Hence, there is a major shortage of skilled labour in the region. Employers also expressed that they have had difficulties in finding individuals with the appropriate skills to fill their vacancies. While they receive numerous applications for their skilled labour job postings, only a handful of applicants possess the right skills to do the job.

Education is the main focus to solve this shortage, therefore the region should consider the solution that can use its current workforce. There are potentially enough people to complement the skilled labour supply as the region has a relatively large share of the population with no certificate, diploma, or degree or with a high school diploma. Focussing on re-educating this population to an apprenticeship or trades certificate or degree can increase the supply of skilled labour.

Solution #3: Improve apprentice and trade labour availability	
Objective:	Partner with local high schools and post-secondary institutions to provide the work force with the skills in greatest demand.
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquire with employers which apprenticeship or trades position they experience the most difficulties in finding the right employee. • Present the list of most needed trade curriculums to relevant local high schools and post-secondary institutions that have the capacity to offer them (i.e., SAIT, CDI, etc.). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A curriculum should be designed based on the list of needed trade curriculums and it should incorporate hands-on learning experiences, apprenticeships, and practical training into the program. This should be coordinated with educators, industry experts and stakeholders to make sure that the program will provide participants with the skills employers need. ○ A good example of this is that a school in Langdon for grades 7 to 12 will incorporate several trades and agricultural programs as part of their work experience program and provide opportunities for employers to partner with them. • Once the program and partnerships have been established, market the program in the region so that the work force is aware of this opportunity. • Identify any high schools that currently provide the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). This program is a partnership between the provincial government and high schools that provide students credits and job experience towards an apprenticeship program prior to their graduation. If any schools already administer this program, it should be promoted to local employers that may be able to take on apprenticeships. If no schools use this program, then schools that may be good candidates for the program should be approached with the opportunity.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities – Public Partners

Solution #4: Assist with basic training	
Objective:	Additional assistance with basic training needs required in skilled labour positions is provided by regional partners
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next to the job-specific skills, many positions require other basic training, such as WHMIS and first aid. Prospect provides WHMIS and first aid training courses in the region, but there isn't sufficient uptake in the programs. Additional promotion and funding of these programs will likely attract more candidates. • Regional partners can discuss with employers what basic training is the most relevant, or those that applicants may be missing, to create a candidate intake program with them. Simpler programs like micro-credentialing, which can be completed in 6 to 12 weeks, may also quickly assist in filling some of these gaps. Common examples of micro-credentialing programs include supply chain and insurance. • Public partners can directly provide this training or set up a fund and provide grants to residents taking this basic training themselves. The Government of Alberta also provides funding for various training programs and initiatives.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities – Public Partners

Solution #5: Launch internship programs, connecting interested businesses with post-secondary institutions	
Objective:	Supplement the workforce with interns and provide more students with work experience so they can enter the workforce easier once they finish their education.
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquire with regional employers if they would be open to participate in an internship program. • Subsequently, these employers can be connected to a local post-secondary institution through the regional partner(s) to set-up an internship program. • The regional partner(s) can also play an intermediate role in designing the program.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Partners

4.3. AVAILABLE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Through surveys and interviews, both businesses and residents have highlighted a pressing concern: the scarcity of available and affordable housing. This shortage poses a significant obstacle for employers, as it hampers their ability to both attract and retain employees. The challenge is particularly pronounced when candidates relocating from outside the region struggle to secure housing near their workplace. Employers also stated that they would strongly welcome support from regional public partners in addressing this issue.

For residents, the survey revealed that the lack of housing options stands out as the primary factor impeding increased participation in the labour market, and it ranks amongst one of the top three barriers to employment. While current residents with established housing enjoy a sense of stability, the insufficient inventory of affordable rental properties discourages the region's younger generation from settling locally.

In residential housing, private land developers play a pivotal role as the primary investors and facilitators behind residential developments. Tasked with acquiring, servicing, and priming land for construction, these stakeholders bear substantial financial risks throughout the development process. Some developers operate on a fully vertical model, overseeing everything from land acquisition to home construction and final building sales. Regardless of their operational scope, developers shoulder significant responsibilities, managing costs, timing, and completion to ensure the success of each development. To optimize the land development environment and facilitate the swift realization of new projects, municipalities should provide reasonable development costs and processes.

Municipalities themselves can also create a housing strategy, a document which develops an action plan that guides municipalities in how to best address local housing needs and challenges.

To foster labour market growth, enhance retention of second-generation residents, and attract new residents, the region must prioritize the development of a robust supply of rental housing that remains within an affordable price range.

Solution #6: Create a proactive land development environment	
Objective:	Optimize all aspects and processes involved in municipal residential land development to facilitate swift progress for stakeholders involved in development and construction.
Action:	<p>Assess and improve the following where required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal land development processes should be well structured, organized, and most importantly, provide time commitments to developers on all the specific phases. • Off-site levies should be competitive or reasonable. If they are high, they should be assessed and steps should be taken to reduce them. • Servicing should be at a good capacity and ideally close to the property lines of available land. • Zoning should account for or create requirements for high-density residential developments to increase the volume of low cost and affordable housing. A focused increase on apartments or townhouses as opposed to single detached houses. • Property taxes should be competitive or reasonable. Rental properties are long-term investments for investors and the added long-term fixed costs influence their investment decisions. If they are high, steps should be taken to reduce them or freeze them for a set term.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities

Solution #7: Create a Grant to Reduce Off-Site Levies

Objective:	Offer development incentives, programs or grants that will assist with reducing the costs of development and attract development stakeholders.
Action:	These are grants that either reduce off-site levy costs up front taken from a pool of funds or can be offered as reduced property taxes over a set period of time to act as delayed rebate. They can be structured to account for residential development requirements with restrictions.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities

Solution #8: Create Property Tax Incentives

Objective:	Offer development incentives, programs or grants that will assist with reducing the costs of development and attract development stakeholders.
Action:	These incentives operate within specified timeframes, typically spanning three to five years, and are extended to developers under specific conditions. For instance, developers that construct a designated volume of high-density residential properties may qualify for a 50% reduction in property tax over a three-year period. This reduction could be contingent upon enforcing a quicker expiry on their development permit or achieved at predetermined stages of the development process.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities

Solution #9: Sell Land for a Small Fee

Objective:	Offer development incentives, programs or grants that will assist with reducing the costs of development and attract development stakeholders.
Action:	This is where a municipality would provide a residential lot or piece of land for a small fee to an investor or developer as an incentive for housing development. These offers come with specified conditions aimed at expediting the completion of residential projects. As an example, the Town of Cochrane in Ontario is creating a program that provides a residential lot for \$10 to incentivize residential construction. It is conditional on a timeframe for building the house and financial requirements. Other municipalities that have run similar programs include Pipestone, Manitoba, Mundare, Alberta, and McAdam, New Brunswick.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities

Solution #10: Develop a Regional Housing Strategy

Objective:	Develop a Housing Strategy, which considers all affiliated communities, to develop a plan and actions for how housing should be approached by all relevant groups.
Action:	Form a committee representing all affiliated communities to lead the development of the Housing Strategy. This committee should define the scope of the strategy and then procure expertise to complete the developed scope. The scope of the strategy should include an assessment of housing needs and gaps, stakeholder engagement, defining of terms such as "affordable housing", recommendations and actions that address priority areas, and identification of key partners and stakeholders to involve in actioning out the strategy.

Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities

Solution #11: Investigate affordable housing initiatives

Objective:	Assess affordable housing initiatives that the municipalities can implement with investors or agencies such as housing management bodies.
Action:	<p>Investigate which affordable housing programs can be used to provide funding or financing for municipalities, non-profits, and private developers.</p> <p>One of the most common programs is the Affordable Housing Fund from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). This program provides low-interest loans and forgivable loans to build new affordable housing. It requires a partnership with a level of government; therefore, municipalities can partner with non-profits, a housing management body, or a private developer to access this program.</p> <p>Some other organizations that can be considered for affordable housing programs include the Alberta Government, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), and the Community Housing Transformation Center (CHTC).</p> <p>Additionally, to foster local business and employment opportunities, integrating local procurement mandates within housing project Requests for Proposals (RFPs) can be instrumental. In doing so, local vendors and workers can participate in housing initiatives.</p>
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities

4.4. TRAINING FOR SMALLER EMPLOYERS WITHOUT ACCESS TO HR RESOURCES

Maintaining a strong small business community is a crucial factor for successful regional economic development. However, many smaller employers face significant challenges in navigating the complexities of human resources (HR) management, often lacking the resources and expertise to implement robust HR practices. This can hinder their ability to attract and retain top talent. Finding suitable workers for vacancies demands expertise in hiring and knowing what key elements attract the right candidates.

65% of regional employers surveyed did not have any business supports or were not aware that they may be available from public partners. It is understandable that this was a common response, considering that many of the businesses in the CFWR region are small employers. If it was made available to them, operational help and business coaching were two of the most requested supports.

Taking this into account, it will be important to address the unique operational labour needs of small employers to improve the regional labour market. This provides an opportunity for the public partners to collaborate and assist with human resources (HR) support for small businesses, ensuring that they are equipped with the appropriate knowledge and expertise for employee recruitment.

Solution #12: Provide HR training programs to small businesses	
Objective:	Fill the knowledge gap some small employers may have surrounding HR processes and best practices.
Action:	<p>Public partners can develop and deliver localized training programs focused on essential HR functions tailored to the needs of smaller employers. These programs could cover a range of key topics such as applicant screening techniques, effective job posting strategies, applicant tracking systems, and post-interview follow-up protocols.</p> <p>While implementing these training programs will likely be driven by non-municipal partners, the municipalities can also provide support through additional funding. The following actions should be completed to implement the recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs Assessment: Before developing the training programs, conduct a thorough needs assessment to understand the specific HR challenges faced by small businesses in the CFWR region. This assessment can be carried out through surveys, interviews, and focus groups with small business owners to identify their most pressing needs and areas for improvement. • Collaboration with Public Partners: Identify relevant public partners that have the capability of taking the lead in developing and delivering the training programs. Potential partners may include Prospect, chambers of commerce in the different municipalities, and CFWR. • Content Development: Based on the needs assessment findings, the content for the training programs should be developed to cover essential HR functions relevant to small businesses. This may include topics such as recruitment and hiring best practices, employee onboarding procedures, performance management, and compliance with labour laws and regulations. • Delivery Methods: To ensure accessibility and flexibility, the training programs should be delivered using a variety of methods. Traditional classroom-style sessions can be organized at local community centers or business incubators, allowing small business owners to interact with instructors and fellow participants in-person. Informal lunch and learn workshops can also be held at local restaurants or businesses, providing a casual setting for learning and networking. Additionally, virtual classroom formats can be utilized to reach small business owners who may have scheduling constraints or limited access to transportation. • Promotion and Outreach: Effective promotion and outreach efforts are essential to ensure maximum participation in the training programs. Public partners can utilize various channels, such

	<p>as social media, email newsletters, and local business networks, to promote the programs and encourage small business owners to register. Offering incentives, such as discounted registration fees or free resource materials, can also help incentivize participation and improve accessibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation and Feedback: Continuous evaluation and feedback mechanisms should be implemented to assess the effectiveness of the training programs and identify areas for improvement. Surveys, focus groups, and post-training assessments can be used to gather feedback from participants and adjust the content and delivery methods accordingly.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities – Public Partners

Solution #13: Create opportunities for local businesses to share experiences related to HR management	
Objective:	Promote collaboration and knowledge sharing surrounding HR management within the local business community.
Action:	<p>Public partners can foster a collaborative ecosystem where smaller employers can share insights, best practices, and challenges related to HR management. By facilitating networking opportunities and peer-to-peer learning forums, stakeholders can create a supportive environment conducive to continuous improvement and innovation in recruitment and retention practices. To implement the recommendation, the following steps should be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Networking Events: Public partners can organize networking events specifically focused on HR management for small businesses. These events can take the form of breakfast meetings, luncheons, or after-work mixers, providing informal settings for small business owners to connect, share experiences, and learn from one another. • Facilitate Peer-to-Peer Learning Forums: In addition to networking events, public partners can establish more formal peer-to-peer learning forums where small business owners can come together to discuss common HR challenges, share best practices, and seek advice from their peers. These forums can be structured as roundtable discussions, panel sessions, or workshops facilitated by HR experts or experienced business owners in the community. • Encourage Case Studies and Success Stories: Public partners can showcase case studies and success stories highlighting innovative HR practices and successful recruitment and retention strategies implemented by local businesses. These case studies can serve as inspiration for other small businesses and provide valuable insights into effective HR management strategies. • Offer Mentoring and Coaching Programs: Public partners can facilitate mentoring and coaching programs where experienced HR professionals or successful business owners mentor and coach small business owners on HR management best practices, providing personalized guidance and support to help them overcome challenges and achieve their HR goals
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities – Public Partners

4.5. STAKEHOLDER LABOUR SERVICES ENGAGEMENT

One of the objectives of the surveys was to assess employer and resident awareness of services provided by regional public partners in labour support, checking if respondents knew about these services.

Among employers, it was found that approximately 65% of respondents lacked awareness of local public partners providing business or labour support. It is important to note that, within business culture, seeking or even having knowledge of support services from regional public organizations is not commonplace; therefore, this response was not surprising.

Similarly, among residents, roughly 75% of respondents were unaware of local public partners offering employment support. However, respondents highlighted two services that they considered to be highly beneficial for future employment assistance: a list of local employment opportunities and access to training.

Respondents who were familiar with local services independently named Prospect Human Services, Community Futures, Wheatland Employment, and Kneehill Adult Services.

These public partners currently provide valuable programs for employers and residents; therefore, restructuring their existing initiatives is likely not necessary. Instead, the emphasis should be on proactively increasing community awareness to encourage greater participation.

Solution #14: Increase Direct Engagement	
Objective:	Create a greater awareness of the labour programs that local public partners have, to generate more participation from employers and residents.
Action:	Conduct more face-to-face visits and interviews with various employers to allow for an in-depth understanding of their specific labour needs. This proactive approach enables the partners to pinpoint challenges, identify training priorities, and foster crucial relationships with employers.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Partners

Solution #15: Optimize Labour Events	
Objective:	Create a greater awareness of the labour programs that local public partners have, to generate more participation from employers and residents.
Action:	<p>Assess the effectiveness of existing labour events through direct interaction with employers, which will provide additional insight. Understanding whether these events adequately meet the needs of both employers and residents is crucial for optimizing their impact. This evaluation may reveal the necessity for additional events or the expansion of current ones to address evolving labour market dynamics. Also, soliciting feedback from attending residents will ensure that these events remain relevant and beneficial to the community.</p> <p>The Government of Alberta also provides funding to assist with labour events.</p>
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities – Public Partners

Solution #16: Regional Outreach Campaign

Objective:	Create a greater awareness of the labour programs that local public partners have, to generate more participation from employers and residents.
Action:	Implement a comprehensive regional marketing program will be essential to raise awareness among both employers and residents about available labour initiatives. Leveraging platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn allows for targeted messaging and broader outreach. While intermittent posts serve to maintain visibility, investing in targeted advertising on these platforms will significantly enhance reach and engagement. By consistently promoting partner programs and activities, the partners will ensure they remain prominently positioned in the minds of employers and residents.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities – Public Partners

4.6. REGIONAL RECRUITMENT

An item brought forward from engagement is that both residents and businesses are not aware of available employment services. The region does already have two organizations, Prospect Human Services and the Kneehill Adult Learning Centre, who provide employment services. Prospect Human Services is a human resource services providing webinars, resume building and cover letter writing assistance, job search strategies and much more. Moreover, they organize a number of events each year to bring employers and employees together. Prospect Human Services covers all the CFWR region except for Kneehill County. In Kneehill, the Kneehill Adult Learning Centre does not provide the same extent of services as Prospect Human Services, but they do offer resume and cover letter writing assistance. Unfortunately, the survey showed that only a quarter of all residents are aware of these services. The recommended solutions below outline ways to build upon the work of these organizations and increase the engagement of residents and employers in the region alike.

Solution #17: Increase the number of job fairs	
Objective:	Bring together more employers and potential employees.
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with employers in the region, organize more job fairs throughout the CFWR region to engage as many residents as possible. Currently, annual job fairs are organized in Strathmore and Chestermere and one is being set-up in Langdon by Prospect Human Services. • Job fairs in more locations with an increased frequency can match more employers and employees. These can be smaller job fairs in smaller towns and villages in the region and they don't have to be of the same scale of current job fairs in Strathmore and Chestermere. • Funding required for organizing these activities could be shared by all public partners in the region and potentially employers.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities – Public Partners

Solution #18: Promote skilled trades careers and opportunities at high schools	
Objective:	Engage with high school students through recruitment and promotional activities and provide teenagers with a realistic image of an apprenticeship or trades job to improve the perception and values of skilled trade.
Action:	Reach-out to local high schools and set-up activities with the high school and employers. Provide the high schoolers with a description of what the path to become a professional in one of the most in-demand apprenticeships or trades in the region looks like. By engaging more with high schoolers and giving them a description of the work, it can improve their perception of what an apprenticeship or trades job involves and how to make a living with it.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Partners

Solution #19: Create opportunities for high schoolers to shadow apprentices or trade employees	
Objective:	Foster high schoolers' interest in apprenticeship or trades jobs.
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high schoolers with high interest in a certain apprenticeship or trades job can be invited to shadow an employee in this profession for a day. • These individuals can be found at the other activities at high school and this opportunity should be promoted at those activities as well.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will provide the high schoolers with a real-life experience in apprenticeship and trades jobs.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Partners

Solution #20: Create promotional videos of apprenticeship and trades jobs marketed to youth

Objective:	Provide a broad, young audience with a real-life idea of an apprenticeship or trades jobs.
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create promotional videos in the “day in the shoes of...”-style. These should be produced to show the day-to-day activities of an employee in that profession. These videos should be marketed not just via the traditional channels, but focus should be on marketing through social media, such as Instagram and TikTok, to foster the interest of these jobs among youth. Social media influencers need to be approached to make the message more appealing to youth.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipalities – Public Partners

Solution #21: Create a regional employment portal

Objective:	Create a platform that serves as a one-stop space for employers and residents that provides regional job listings.
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create this platform with multiple partners but have one partner manage the platform. Vacancies in the region should be posted on this one-stop platform. The survey results showed that there is a demand for this as 78% of the respondents said that a list of current job opportunities in the region would be a valuable resource in assisting people to access employment opportunities. To limit the resources needed to run this portal, job vacancies should be posted for a fixed time and be removed once this period has passed. This will minimize the costs involved in verifying whether job vacancies on the portal are still open or have been filled. There is an existing local job portal called <i>Temployment</i> (https://temployment.ca/) which services the Town of Strathmore and Wheatland County. The regional partners may be able to collaborate with this provider to see if the portal can be expanded and promoted to benefit a wider audience that services the entire region. Engaging with other similar providers that operate job portals in the province may provide additional guidance for creating best practices. As an example, The Job Resource Centre provides a job portal for the Town of Canmore and the Town of Banff (https://www.jobresourcecentre.com/).
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipalities – Public Partners

Solution #22: Market the regional employment portal

Objective:	Create wide-spread awareness of the employment portal in the region.
Action:	To make the regional employment portal a success, more engagement with employers and employees is needed. Things to consider when creating the marketing strategy of the portal are:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market the portal at all events already being organized in the region, such as webinars and job fairs. • Marketing should not exclusively happen through the traditional channels, such as Facebook, but also through channels such as Instagram and TikTok to speak more to the youth in the region.
Priority Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Priority
Relevant Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities – Public Partners

5. Conclusion

With a growing economy and major development projects underway, the Community Futures Wildrose region is poised to experience an increase in labour demand. The region is already facing a lower unemployment rate and higher vacancy rate when compared to Calgary and the rest of Alberta, indicating that finding the right workers for job openings is becoming increasingly more difficult with less availability of specific labour categories in the CFWR region.

Engagement with the community through business and resident surveys, interviews, and a strategic planning workshop revealed a perception mismatch between employers and labour market participants on key matters such as job availability, and the level of skills development and/or qualifications. While employers expressed difficulty in attracting applicants with the right set of skills and qualifications when hiring for a new position, labour market participants saw a lack of jobs as the number one barrier to employment for the region. Beyond the direct factors relating to the labour market, structural factors surrounding cost of living and affordable housing were cited by both labour market participants and employers as issues of concern for labour attraction and retention.

Employers are experiencing labour shortages in two key types of labour, general labour and skilled labour, each necessitating tailored solutions. Addressing structural barriers to labour attraction, such as housing availability and skills mismatches, demands proactive measures. Enhancing education and training through public initiatives, coupled with incentivizing affordable housing development, will play a pivotal role in maintaining a stable labour supply. Moreover, initiatives like the Rural Renewal Program can assist with gaps in general labour within the region. Concurrently, prioritizing skills training and education will address deficiencies in skilled labor.

Finally, empowering employers through targeted learning initiatives to refine recruitment and retention strategies will be important to provide employers with the right tools to successfully attract and retain qualified job seekers. Stakeholders should also foster a collaborative approach to bolster the regional labour market, engaging with the community to facilitate connections between employers and potential employees. By adopting a multifaceted strategy that integrates policy interventions, educational support, and community engagement, we can pave the way for a resilient and thriving labour market.

Appendices

METHOD DESCRIPTION FOR REGIONAL GDP AND EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATION

One challenge in regional economic analysis is the lack of regional data. The GDP model solves this problem and estimates regional GDP based on provincial productivity, provincial employment and regional census data on employment.

The main idea of the model is that provincial worker productivity can be used to estimate regional GDP. The underlying assumption of the model is that a worker's productivity in a specific region and sector is the same as employee productivity in the same sector in the province. Essentially, it assumes that if the average Albertan worker in, for instance, construction contributes, say, \$50,000 to this industry's GDP, an individual working in construction in Jasper, High Level or Medicine Hat also contributes \$50,000 to the industry's GDP in these regions. Using provincial productivity per worker per industry and combining this with the region-specific employment data enables the model to estimate this region's monthly GDP.

The first step in this process is to calculate the workers productivity per industry in the province. This is done by dividing provincial industry GDP by provincial employment in this sector. In the absence of large shocks, labour productivity moves steadily without much volatility. Therefore, the productivity can be linearly interpolated to estimate monthly productivity.

Next, data on regional employment per sector is required. Census data provides this information but has as a downside that it is only available every 5 years. To estimate monthly employment per sector, the model uses the variation in monthly provincial employment to interpolate the census data with monthly data. Effectively, it assumes that the region experiences the same contractions and expansions of sectors as the province does.

Finally, to calculate regional GDP, monthly productivity per sector is multiplied by monthly employment per sector. This yields estimated GDP per sector in the region of interest. The regional GDP amounts to a simple summation of the GDP of all sectors.

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) BY SECTOR (ALL SECTORS)(x1000)

	CFWR			Rocky View County (East)		
Industry	December 2012 GDP	December 2022 GDP	% Change	December 2012 GDP	December 2022 GDP	% Change
All industries	\$5,684,857	\$5,803,472	2.0%	\$1,856,144	\$1,787,912	-3.8%
Agriculture, forestry, logging, and support	\$411,465	\$533,793	22.9%	\$106,216	\$119,236	10.9%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	\$755,762	\$794,992	4.9%	\$249,909	\$249,569	-0.1%
Utilities	\$102,788	\$68,990	-49.0%	\$22,406	\$18,099	-23.8%
Construction	\$733,838	\$571,920	-28.3%	\$281,899	\$228,564	-23.3%
Manufacturing	\$532,079	\$513,344	-3.6%	\$171,168	\$155,433	-10.1%
Wholesale trade	\$315,827	\$297,415	-6.2%	\$108,084	\$97,592	-10.8%
Retail trade	\$226,566	\$243,953	7.1%	\$74,892	\$75,278	0.5%
Transportation and warehousing	\$345,739	\$367,654	6.0%	\$142,353	\$127,960	-11.2%
Finance and insurance	\$236,715	\$219,342	-7.9%	\$70,006	\$62,289	-12.4%
Real estate and rental and leasing	\$536,789	\$526,774	-1.9%	\$184,084	\$166,000	-10.9%
Professional, scientific and technical services	\$274,465	\$303,654	9.6%	\$91,436	\$93,706	2.4%
Business, building and other support services	\$182,271	\$223,034	18.3%	\$64,822	\$82,099	21.0%
Educational services	\$176,556	\$158,750	-11.2%	\$40,187	\$35,531	-13.1%
Health care and social assistance	\$235,715	\$290,598	18.9%	\$62,124	\$74,910	17.1%
Information, culture and recreation	\$124,544	\$143,796	13.4%	\$34,744	\$39,397	11.8%
Accommodation and food services	\$86,471	\$88,495	2.3%	\$21,901	\$21,136	-3.6%
Other services (except public administration)	\$98,365	\$153,814	36.0%	\$32,744	\$53,483	38.8%
Public administration	\$308,903	\$303,154	-1.90%	\$97,169	\$87,629	-10.9%
	Kneehill County			Wheatland County		
Industry	December 2012 GDP	December 2022 GDP	% Change	December 2012 GDP	December 2022 GDP	% Change
All industries	\$727,479	\$721,328	-0.9%	\$646,959	\$661,152	2.1%
Agriculture, forestry, logging, and support	\$133,537	\$169,181	21.1%	\$133,168	\$186,794	28.7%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	\$88,891	\$101,642	12.5%	\$91,882	\$68,676	-33.8%
Utilities	\$14,697	\$3,649	-302.8%	\$14,465	\$8,745	-65.4%
Construction	\$77,576	\$63,024	-23.1%	\$75,820	\$62,452	-21.4%
Manufacturing	\$70,856	\$60,502	-17.1%	\$58,194	\$36,466	-59.6%
Wholesale trade	\$35,619	\$45,006	20.9%	\$30,761	\$27,815	-10.6%
Retail trade	\$27,661	\$22,596	-22.4%	\$20,290	\$20,158	-0.7%

Transportation and warehousing	\$31,271	\$27,286	-14.6%	\$27,323	\$28,446	3.9%
Finance and insurance	\$33,513	\$21,158	-58.4%	\$12,842	\$22,664	43.3%
Real estate and rental and leasing	\$28,225	\$13,362	-111.2%	\$32,966	\$50,762	35.1%
Professional, scientific and technical services	\$23,867	\$26,899	11.3%	\$24,586	\$23,693	-3.8%
Business, building and other support services	\$8,699	\$17,382	50.0%	\$21,165	\$21,612	2.1%
Educational services	\$32,912	\$24,434	-34.7%	\$25,059	\$15,800	-58.6%
Health care and social assistance	\$45,257	\$40,338	-12.2%	\$18,307	\$21,366	14.3%
Information, culture and recreation	\$7,810	\$15,502	49.6%	\$17,166	\$12,569	-36.6%
Accommodation and food services	\$12,173	\$12,448	2.2%	\$9,037	\$4,652	-94.2%
Other services (except public administration)	\$13,989	\$22,698	38.4%	\$12,005	\$18,812	36.2%
Public administration	\$40,925	\$34,220	-19.6%	\$21,924	\$29,670	26.1%
	City of Strathmore			City of Chestermere		
Industry	December 2012 GDP	December 2022 GDP	% Change	December 2012 GDP	December 2022 GDP	% Change
All industries	\$1,005,979	\$924,928	-8.8%	\$1,448,296	\$1,708,152	15.2%
Agriculture, forestry, logging, and support	\$31,029	\$48,369	35.8%	\$7,514	\$10,213	26.4%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	\$137,293	\$128,279	-7.0%	\$187,786	\$246,825	23.9%
Utilities	\$27,560	\$11,640	-136.8%	\$23,659	\$26,857	11.9%
Construction	\$113,683	\$79,673	-42.7%	\$184,859	\$138,207	-33.8%
Manufacturing	\$70,006	\$85,395	18.0%	\$161,854	\$175,549	7.8%
Wholesale trade	\$55,775	\$39,164	-42.4%	\$85,588	\$87,837	2.6%
Retail trade	\$52,958	\$53,273	0.6%	\$50,765	\$72,647	30.1%
Transportation and warehousing	\$58,280	\$54,260	-7.4%	\$86,512	\$129,701	33.3%
Finance and insurance	\$45,690	\$30,925	-47.7%	\$74,664	\$82,306	9.3%
Real estate and rental and leasing	\$118,590	\$63,699	-86.2%	\$172,925	\$232,951	25.8%
Professional, scientific and technical services	\$43,817	\$48,341	9.4%	\$90,759	\$111,014	18.2%
Business, building and other support services	\$32,573	\$42,435	23.2%	\$55,012	\$59,506	7.6%
Educational services	\$41,593	\$37,558	-10.7%	\$36,805	\$45,427	19.0%
Health care and social assistance	\$49,349	\$62,967	21.6%	\$60,679	\$91,017	33.3%
Information, culture and recreation	\$24,948	\$27,355	8.8%	\$39,876	\$48,973	18.6%
Accommodation and food services	\$21,074	\$22,674	7.1%	\$22,287	\$27,584	19.2%

Other services (except public administration)	\$15,859	\$21,003	24.5%	\$23,767	\$37,817	37.2%
Public administration	\$65,900	\$67,917	3.0%	\$82,985	\$83,718	0.9%
	City of Calgary			Alberta		
Industry	December 2012 GDP	December 2022 GDP	% Change	December 2012 GDP	December 2022 GDP	% Change
All industries	\$96,662,449	\$95,878,897	-0.8%	\$294,039,200	\$331,488,800	11.3%
Agriculture, forestry, logging, and support	\$247,205	\$411,574	39.9%	\$5,353,900	\$7,434,800	28.0%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	\$13,420,261	\$14,320,684	6.3%	\$45,788,400	\$63,259,400	27.6%
Utilities	\$2,112,567	\$1,237,237	-70.7%	\$4,296,300	\$4,693,800	8.5%
Construction	\$9,530,796	\$7,346,987	-29.7%	\$35,971,600	\$28,462,300	-26.4%
Manufacturing	\$7,459,466	\$6,819,084	-9.4%	\$24,525,500	\$25,257,800	2.9%
Wholesale trade	\$4,981,469	\$3,888,348	-28.1%	\$15,939,900	\$16,296,700	2.2%
Retail trade	\$4,213,959	\$4,405,223	4.3%	\$12,869,900	\$14,715,500	12.5%
Transportation and warehousing	\$4,637,195	\$6,025,475	23.0%	\$14,131,600	\$16,176,100	12.6%
Finance and insurance	\$4,821,991	\$4,640,859	-3.9%	\$11,630,600	\$14,724,100	21.0%
Real estate and rental and leasing	\$12,600,685	\$12,030,265	-4.7%	\$31,368,000	\$40,138,900	21.9%
Professional, scientific and technical services	\$8,481,987	\$9,243,977	8.2%	\$17,998,100	\$17,555,200	-2.5%
Business, building and other support services	\$3,893,037	\$4,049,759	3.9%	\$10,089,200	\$7,926,700	-27.3%
Educational services	\$3,752,729	\$3,127,531	-20.0%	\$11,903,600	\$13,344,200	10.8%
Health care and social assistance	\$5,018,578	\$6,577,004	23.7%	\$17,667,200	\$21,997,100	19.7%
Information, culture and recreation	\$3,372,635	\$3,259,566	-3.5%	\$8,228,800	\$8,891,800	7.5%
Accommodation and food services	\$2,045,891	\$2,176,076	6.0%	\$6,624,500	\$6,717,000	1.4%
Other services (except public administration)	\$1,547,855	\$2,095,677	26.1%	\$6,075,300	\$6,595,200	7.9%
Public administration	\$4,524,145	\$4,223,571	-7.1%	\$15,406,700	\$17,503,800	12.0%

CURRENT AND HISTORIC EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR (ALL SECTORS)

	CFWR			Rocky View County (East)		
Industry	December 2013 employment	December 2023 employment	% Change	December 2013 employment	December 2023 employment	% Change
All industries	42105	47492	12.8%	13190	14484	9.8%
Agriculture, forestry, logging, and support	4517	2787	-38.3%	1155	622	-46.1%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	2903	1880	-35.2%	946	590	-37.6%
Utilities	366	350	-4.4%	77	92	19.0%
Construction	4934	4855	-1.6%	1828	1940	6.2%
Manufacturing	2803	2750	-1.9%	893	833	-6.8%
Wholesale trade	1614	1752	8.5%	565	575	1.8%
Retail trade	4354	4468	2.6%	1409	1379	-2.1%
Transportation and warehousing	2819	2925	3.7%	1137	1018	-10.5%
Finance and insurance	1193	1263	5.9%	348	359	3.1%
Real estate and rental and leasing	590	469	-20.6%	204	148	-27.4%
Professional, scientific and technical services	2564	3668	43.1%	868	1132	30.4%
Business, building and other support services	1531	2291	49.6%	545	843	54.7%
Educational services	1871	1692	-9.6%	431	379	-12.2%
Health care and social assistance	3131	4350	38.9%	819	1121	37.0%
Information, culture and recreation	1159	1366	17.9%	324	374	15.5%
Accommodation and food services	2102	1772	-15.7%	509	423	-16.8%
Other services (except public administration)	2037	2206	8.3%	688	767	11.4%
Public administration	1959	1920	-2.0%	630	555	-11.9%
	Kneehill County			Wheatland County		
Industry	December 2013 employment	December 2023 employment	% Change	December 2013 employment	December 2023 employment	% Change
All industries	6013	6156	2.4%	5106	5290	3.6%
Agriculture, forestry, logging, and support	1473	883	-40.0%	1460	975	-33.2%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	354	240	-32.2%	331	162	-50.9%
Utilities	45	19	-58.6%	54	44	-18.0%
Construction	523	535	2.3%	522	530	1.5%
Manufacturing	340	324	-4.7%	316	195	-38.2%
Wholesale trade	180	265	47.4%	154	164	6.5%

Retail trade	514	414	-19.6%	419	369	-11.8%
Transportation and warehousing	269	217	-19.2%	231	226	-2.1%
Finance and insurance	162	122	-24.8%	68	130	90.7%
Real estate and rental and leasing	38	12	-69.1%	39	45	16.3%
Professional, scientific and technical services	214	325	51.7%	227	286	26.0%
Business, building and other support services	90	179	99.2%	171	222	29.6%
Educational services	323	260	-19.4%	252	168	-33.3%
Health care and social assistance	586	604	3.1%	242	320	32.0%
Information, culture and recreation	89	147	65.7%	146	119	-18.2%
Accommodation and food services	277	249	-10.0%	203	93	-54.0%
Other services (except public administration)	287	325	13.5%	230	270	17.1%
Public administration	264	217	-17.9%	153	188	23.0%
	City of Strathmore			City of Chestermere		
Industry	December 2013 employment	December 2023 employment	% Change	December 2013 employment	December 2023 employment	% Change
All industries	7390	8172	10.6%	10406	13390	28.7%
Agriculture, forestry, logging, and support	339	253	-25.6%	89	53	-40.3%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	518	303	-41.5%	754	584	-22.6%
Utilities	90	59	-34.3%	100	136	36.0%
Construction	799	676	-15.4%	1262	1173	-7.0%
Manufacturing	402	458	13.9%	852	941	10.4%
Wholesale trade	265	231	-13.0%	450	517	14.9%
Retail trade	986	976	-1.1%	1025	1330	29.8%
Transportation and warehousing	467	432	-7.6%	715	1032	44.4%
Finance and insurance	233	178	-23.5%	382	474	24.0%
Real estate and rental and leasing	110	57	-48.2%	200	207	3.7%
Professional, scientific and technical services	397	584	47.2%	857	1341	56.4%
Business, building and other support services	259	436	68.4%	466	611	31.1%
Educational services	454	400	-11.8%	411	484	17.8%
Health care and social assistance	663	943	42.2%	822	1362	65.8%
Information, culture and recreation	213	260	21.8%	387	465	20.3%

Accommodation and food services	513	454	-11.5%	601	552	-8.0%
Other services (except public administration)	318	301	-5.3%	513	542	5.7%
Public administration	398	430	8.0%	514	530	3.2%