

Regional Workforce Development Study

April 2024

Key Findings and Recommendations
for Community Futures Wild Rose Region

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Community
Futures Wild Rose



Introduction



Break barriers. Employ change.



Study Background and Purpose

Businesses in the Community Futures Wild Rose (CFWR) region are facing significant labor shortages, worsened by the pandemic. Major investments, including Phyto Organix, CGC Inc., and De Havilland Aircraft Facility, will create nearly 3,000 jobs, further straining the labor market. To address these challenges, a regional workforce development project was conducted. It would evaluate labour dynamics and understand the challenges faced by employers and workers, aiming to meet current and future labor demands effectively.

Overview of CFWR Region



The CF Wild Rose region in Alberta, encompasses a diverse and picturesque area characterized by its rural landscapes, small towns, and vibrant communities. Stretching across a wide expanse of land, the region is known for its rich agricultural heritage, outdoor recreational opportunities, and close-knit community spirit. From fertile plains to other natural features, the Wild Rose region offers a unique blend of natural beauty and economic opportunities for residents and visitors alike. With a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship and community development, the region continues to attract individuals and businesses seeking a high quality of life and a supportive environment in which to grow and thrive.

Economic Analysis



Key Highlights

- Regional GDP growth has been impacted by sectors such as agriculture, oil and gas, construction, and real estate.
- Labour market facing shortages in skilled and general workers.
- The region's population is aging at a faster pace compared to the province and Calgary.

Impact on Labour Market

- Significant shortage of both skilled and general workers.
- Approximately 80% of jobs are general and skilled labor, but only 10% of the population have trades background.

GDP Trends and Forecast

- GDP growth has been sluggish, but some sectors like construction are expected to grow.
- Investments in major projects expected to create approximately 3,000 jobs in the region.

Population Growth

- Increased from 67,072 in 2011 to 80,590 in 2021.
- Chestermere saw the most significant growth, increasing by 50% from 14,824 to 22,163.
- Rocky View County and Strathmore grew by 20.3% and 16.5%, respectively.
- Kneehill and Wheatland Counties' populations remained steady.
- Overall regional growth was just over 20%, similar to Calgary's 19.1% growth.

Population Distribution

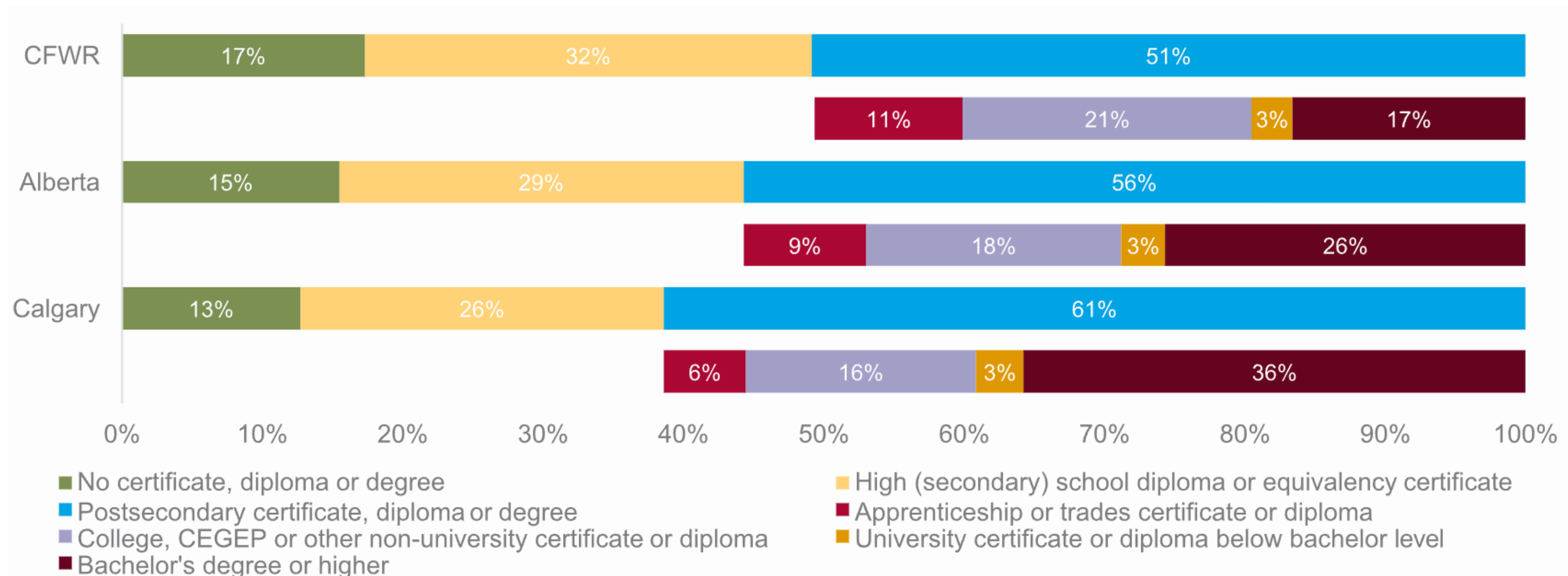
- 64.5% of the population is in the working-age category (15 to 64 years), compared to 68.4% in Calgary and 66.2% in Alberta.
- Higher proportion of residents aged 65 and older than in Calgary and Alberta.
- Larger proportion of residents aged 14 and younger than in Calgary and Alberta.

Population Growth and Distribution



Education Attainment

- 17% of the population aged 15 and older has no certificate, diploma, or degree, higher than Alberta and Calgary.
- 32% have a high school diploma or equivalent, higher than Alberta (29%) and Calgary (26%).
- 51% have some postsecondary education, compared to 56% in Alberta and 61% in Calgary.



Labour Market Overview



Labour Market Dynamics

- Unemployment in CFWR region lower than Calgary and Alberta, stood at 9.8% in 2021.

Skills Shortage Analysis

- 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 labour, 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 market requires, resulting in a disparity between supply of general and skilled labour and the demand for it.

Industry Sectors Impact

- Construction dominates employment in CFWR, reflecting its labor-intensive nature.
- Sectoral employment changes: significant growth in business support and professional services, decline in agriculture and mining sectors.

Business and Resident Engagement

- Resident Surveys
- 596 resident surveys were completed
- Majority of residents (74.2%) have lived in their CFWR region for 6 or more years.
- Common challenges for job seekers included overqualification, lack of job availability, and insufficient pay.
- Business Surveys
- 163 business surveys were completed
- Businesses reported challenges in attracting skilled labour, with concerns over skill mismatches, and limited public transportation.
- Business Interviews
- 21 total direct interviews with companies of different sizes and industry in each municipality.
- Despite challenges, most businesses (97.1%) intend to continue operating in the CFWR region, citing established presence and community advantages.

Community Engagement

Workforce Survey Findings Summary

Increasing Labour Demand:

- CFWR region expects higher labour demand due to economic growth.
- Despite lower unemployment rates, higher vacancy rates and a scarcity of specific labour categories.
- Challenge of matching workers to job openings amid a shortage of general and skilled labor.

Community Feedback:

- Surveys and interviews show employers struggle to find qualified applicants.
- Conversely, job seekers feel there aren't enough jobs.
- Structural factors like cost of living and housing affordability complicate labor attraction and retention.

Collaborative Strategies:

- Enhancing education and training through public initiatives is crucial.
- Local post-secondary education options and skills training programs needed.
- Incentivizing affordable housing development to support workforce stability.
- Help employers with recruitment and retention strategies.
- Foster community collaboration to connect employers and job seekers.



Recommendations



- 01 Fulfilling General Labour Needs
- 02 Fulfilling Skilled Labour Needs
- 03 Addressing Housing Availability
- 04 Supporting Small Employers with HR Resources
- 05 Engaging Stakeholders in Labour Services
- 06 Regional Recruitment Strategies

The Community Futures Wildrose (CFWR) region is poised for significant growth with a burgeoning economy and major development projects increasing labor demand.

By integrating policy interventions, educational support, and proactive community engagement, we can build a resilient and thriving labour market in the CFWR region.

Conclusion

