



A BRIEF HISTORY

Mission Statement

“To assist the citizens of the North Okanagan to achieve significant improvements in permanent employment and sustainable development.”

- **1984 - North Okanagan Development Corporation** was initiated to deliver a **Local Employment Assistance and Development program (LEAD)** under the federal government. This program focused on developing an investment funds for businesses that would create new jobs in the community.,
- **1985 - The Community Futures program** was established in 1985 by the Federal government. From 1985 until 1995, the organization was known as **Okanagan North Community Futures Corporation** (a non-profit corporation) and was assigned responsibility for creating jobs and employment opportunities for the citizens of the North Okanagan.

Encompassing the same geographical area as the North Okanagan Regional District, Community Futures gathered individuals from community groups and sectors to form a volunteer Board of Directors to assist them.

- Okanagan North Community Futures operated in partnership with the **North Okanagan Development Corporation** who was delivering lending services in its Business Development Centre. While Community Futures focused on community economic development activities, the Business Development Centre assisted in the development of small and medium sized businesses in the North Okanagan by providing start-up and expansion loans under our lending arm called the **North Okanagan Development Funding**.
- **1989 - Skills Unlimited** - The Business Development Centre was already very involved with small loans to new and developing businesses. The CFDC addressed the need for a Strategic Plan for community development. Out of this strategic plan came the need to increase training and educational opportunities for our citizens.

In 1989, Skills Unlimited Training Society (a non-profit society) was initiated to provide skill development training Program and employment assistance services to the community. Although a separate society, Skills Unlimited worked together with Community Futures and North Okanagan Development Corporation as the training centre for Community Futures.

- **1987 – 1992 – 1996 – 2002** - Through self employment programs, Community Future assisted participants in creating self-employment opportunities where suitable employment opportunities do not exist. The **Self Employment Benefit (SEB)** initiative was introduced to the North Okanagan in 1996 and was operated by Community Futures until 2002. It is a more advanced version of its predecessors, **the Self Employment Incentive program (SEI – which began in 1987) and the Self Employment Assistance program (SEA – which was implemented in 1992)**.
- **1995** - With changes in a new federal government in 1994, the Community Futures program and the Business Development Centres moved from the Human Resources Development Canada ministry to Western Economic Diversification (WED).

WED proposed that all the Community Futures and BDC's organizations in Western Canada amalgamate under a new Community Futures name.

On April 1st, 1995 all of the CFDC's implemented a name change and our organization took on the name **Community Futures Development Corporation of the North Okanagan (CFDC)** later **shortened to Community Futures – North Okanagan** and was registered as both a not-for-profit organization with the British Columbia government and also a federal non share corporation under Industry Canada's *Canada Corporations Act*.

This meant that all Community Economic Development and skills training activities and all lending activities would now fall under the Community Futures umbrella. Subsequently Skills Unlimited Training Society and North Okanagan Development Funding and their respective activities were all amalgamated under Community Futures – North Okanagan. A decision was made to keep **North Okanagan Development Corporation** active as a holding company. .

- In the fall of **1996**, the **North Okanagan Development Corporation** purchased **new premises** (land and building) at 3105 – 33rd Street, Vernon to house all of Community Futures – North Okanagan's programs in one location. Prior to this, the Community Futures was working out of four (4) different venues.
- In May of **1998**, the organization leased space at 3309C – 31st Avenue, and opened **Connections Career Centre for Youth** which has been in operation since that date.
- In January **2000**, Community Futures Development Corporation of the North Okanagan achieved ISO 9001 Certification.
- In April 2004 Community Futures Development Corporation of the North Okanagan began delivery of the Employment Options program. This program provided a centralized service for North Okanagan job seekers.
- In May **2005**, North Okanagan Development Corporation purchased the final strata of the building on the first floor so that Community Futures could open an **Employment Resource Centre** for the citizens of the North Okanagan. This purchase gave NODC title to the entire building.
- In March 2008, CF-North Okanagan was honored as a joint recipient of the Ministers Award for Innovation for 2007 -2008.
- In April **2008**, Community Futures North Okanagan was nominated for the Employer of the Year Award coordinated by the Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce.
- In June 2008, Connections Career Centre celebrated its 10th anniversary.
- Community Futures – North Okanagan is a member of a provincial network of 34 Community Futures' groups, under the **Community Futures Development Association of BC**, and joins the pan-western initiative with 72 other groups in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.
- In April 2012 Community Futures Development Corporation of the North Okanagan was awarded the Employment Program of British Columbia by the Provincial Ministry of Social Development. This 5 year contract represented a transformation in employment service delivery. The EPBC is designed to provide centralized employment service delivery to all populations, including persons with disabilities, youth, immigrants, persons facing multiple barriers to employment and rural job seekers. Community Futures Development Corporation of the North Okanagan formed delivery partnerships with the North Okanagan Employment Enhancement Society, the John Howard Society, Vernon & District Immigrant Service Society and Kindale Developmental Services to insure that all job seekers benefited from the existing expertise in our region accessing the EPBC.