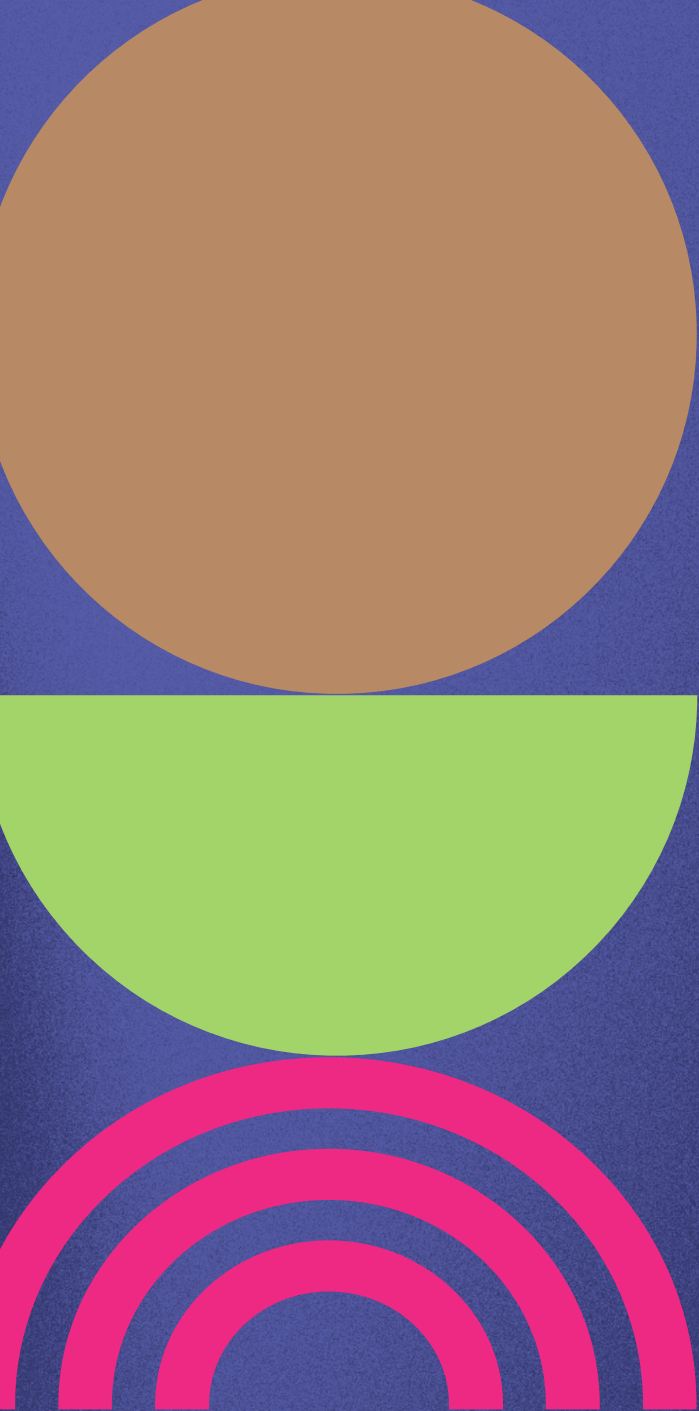




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PRIDE
in Entrepreneurship

ANNUAL REPORT

— 2024-2025 —

Intro

The past year has been a transformative period for our organization, marked by significant progress in outreach, training, and community engagement. Our commitment to fostering inclusive entrepreneurship has led to the successful expansion of the PRIDE in Entrepreneurship (PEP) program, the development of strategic partnerships, and the launch of key initiatives such as the IDEA Ecosystem Hub. Through these efforts, we have not only strengthened our support for 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs but have also reinforced our dedication to equity, education, and empowerment.

With a focus on accessibility and inclusivity, we have reached entrepreneurs in rural communities, provided vital training opportunities, and enhanced our digital presence. This year also saw meaningful collaborations with service providers and industry leaders, further expanding the reach and impact of our programs. As we reflect on our achievements, we recognize the ongoing need to build and refine our initiatives to create even greater opportunities for the communities we serve.

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Our Team



Wendy McCulloch (she/her)

Executive Director, Community Futures British Columbia

Wendy is a respected leader in community economic development with over 35 years of experience. She served as General Manager of Community Futures Boundary from 2005 to 2020, leading regional initiatives in tourism, forestry, arts, and agri-food. Her earlier roles include Project Manager at Community Futures Okanagan Similkameen and Senior Manager at the Business Development Bank of Canada. Wendy also has a background in small business ownership and education management. Her contributions have earned her multiple awards, including the Don McMillan Award and the Kelowna Women of Distinction Lifetime Achievement Award.



Brandi Butts (she/her)

Program Manager, PRIDE in Entrepreneurship

Brandi is committed to advancing inclusion, diversity, accessibility, equity, and belonging. She oversees the program with a GBA+ lens, leading the coordination and delivery of services that support 2SLGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs across British Columbia. With a strong background in program development, training, and inclusive economic initiatives, Brandi brings a thoughtful and strategic approach to fostering entrepreneurship through connection, visibility, and meaningful community impact.



Cheryl Fast (she/her)

Business Advisor, Community Futures BC – Accessible Entrepreneurship Services

Cheryl helps small businesses grow. She offers clear advice, tailored training, and consulting to owners and the groups that support them. Her experience with companies, colleges, and economic development projects gives her a balanced view of business needs. At Community Futures BC, she guides entrepreneurs in the PRIDE in Entrepreneurship programs, and she has served across the Community Futures network since 2007.



Cohen Fredrickson (they/them or he/him)

Program Ambassador, PRIDE in Entrepreneurship

Cohen is based in Victoria, BC on the ancestral lands of the Lekwungen-speaking peoples and home to the Songhees Nation. Cohen is dedicated to supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs. They are passionate about fostering inclusivity, building meaningful connections, and creating spaces where individuals feel safe, seen, and heard. Outside of work, Cohen draws inspiration from music, art, and nature, which inform their advocacy and commitment to meaningful change.

About Us



The Ecosystem Fund (The Fund) is a pillar of the 2SLGBTQI+ Entrepreneurship Program, an initiative supported by the Government of Canada and led by Canada's 2SLGBTQI+ Chamber of Commerce (CGLCC). Support to 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs with opportunities to engage, learn, connect, and grow.

This year brought valuable insights into engagement, accessibility, and community needs within the PRIDE in Entrepreneurship program. A key takeaway was the positive impact of having a dedicated ambassador like Cohen Fredrickson, whose outreach—particularly with urban PRIDE organizations—highlighted the importance of visible representation and community leadership.

Survey results (8.7/10 satisfaction rating) reflect strong approval, and the popularity of workshops on buying/selling a business and mental health emphasized the value of tailored, wraparound support. Mental health and neurodivergent coaching continue to emerge as critical for entrepreneurial sustainability and success.

Collaboration with six CGLCC-certified suppliers reinforced the value of inclusive procurement and the importance of building supplier diversity in the 2SLGBTQI+ business ecosystem.

Post-program interviews and success stories are deepening our understanding of the long-term impact, helping shape a more responsive, inclusive, and sustainable program. As we look ahead we're reminded that this work is ongoing, and that PRIDE in Entrepreneurship continues to be a vital and timely initiative for 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs.



Key Achievements

- **Diverse expertise: Our subject matter experts and consultants include individuals who identify as 2SLGBTQI+, come from BIPOC and Indigenous communities, and collectively speak 13 languages, bringing broad representation and inclusive perspectives**
- **75% of participants completed business plans with financial projections**
- **Diverse advisory committee formed with cross-sector representation**

Accessibility & Inclusivity

PRIDE in Entrepreneurship continues to foster an inclusive, accessible, and empowering environment for 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs by removing barriers and providing meaningful support.

We ensured the IDEA Ecosystem Hub works for everyone by integrating closed captioning, ASL interpretation, and a user-friendly platform. These features have been key drivers of engagement and satisfaction, creating a more equitable experience for all participants. Our client-facing Client Record Management System and the Community Futures BC website meet WCAG 2 accessibility standards, aligning with international best practices for digital inclusivity. Additionally, all contracts and

client correspondence now use gender-neutral language, reinforcing respectful and inclusive communication across the program.

Program outcomes reflect these efforts: 75% of participants successfully created business plans and financial projections. Many reported increased confidence in business strategy, financial planning, and market research. One-on-one coaching and mentorship played a critical role in helping entrepreneurs refine their business models and develop sustainable growth strategies.

Together, these initiatives underscore our commitment to accessibility, equity, and long-term success for 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs.

Program Statistics

This year's progress is reflected in measurable impact on 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurship. Key statistics highlight the growth and engagement within our initiatives:

33

Rural Community Futures offices introduced to PEP

35

Participants enrolled in PEP training programs

86

CF Staff, Board Members and Consultants became Certified in Gender Diversity through TransFocus

5

Strong demand turned 2 planned cohorts into 5

128

2SLGBTQI+ participants enrolled in PEP Business Advisory Sessions

"We are proud to partner with CGLCC and the Government of Canada to empower 2SLGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs in BC. This funding allows us to celebrate the innovation, resilience, and diversity of 2SLGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs, particularly in rural areas"

— Wendy McCulloch, CFBC Executive Director



Key Milestones



These numbers show we've built a solid foundation and we're gaining momentum. And this is just the beginning.

Building New Partnerships

Program Manager Brandi Butts and CFBC Business Advisor David Mitchell formed partnerships with 2SLGBTQI+ businesses and consultants. This led to procurement of services from within the community and built a strong support network for the program.

IDEA Ecosystem Hub

Launched on the Mighty Network platform, this major achievement now serves as a space where participants can collaborate, share resources, and engage with one another.

Program Branding

Partnering with Renée Wood of Anti-Gravity Design Co., a CGLCC-certified supplier, to create a new logo, marketing materials, and branding for PRIDE in Entrepreneurship. Renée also joined as a contract service provider, directly supporting 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs and championing the IDEA Ecosystem Hub.

Strategic Planning Session

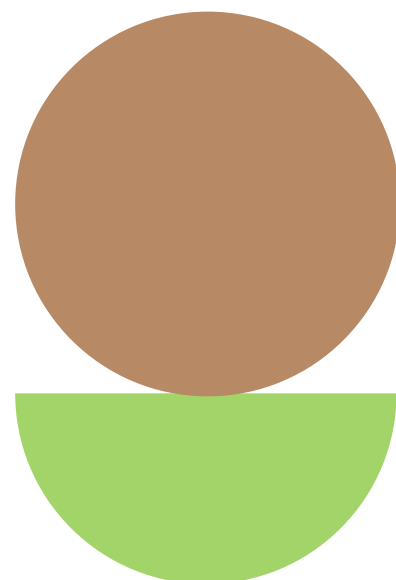
Lauren Semple facilitated a strategic planning session, which will help guide the program's future direction. Lauren also delivered a keynote address at the CFBC Fall Conference, which was a standout moment that resonated with attendees.

TransFocus Training

All CFBC staff completed Gender Diversity Basics and Intermediate training, with additional training for managers, enhancing diversity and accessibility practices.

Language Audit

All documents and online spaces were audited and updated to ensure accessibility and gender-neutral language.



IDEA Ecosystem Hub Program

**Empowering 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs through
community, knowledge, and connection**

Since its launch in September 2024, the IDEA Ecosystem Hub on Mighty Network has grown into a vibrant community for 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs, offering peer networking, mentorship, and up-to-date information on events, workshops, and resources.

The hub fosters belonging through educational content, networking, and real-time discussions with industry experts. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in finance, operations, marketing, and sales & growth engage members with discussion threads, articles, and interactive sessions, providing valuable insights for entrepreneurial success.

While still in its early stages, the IDEA Ecosystem Hub has proven essential in building a stronger, more connected 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurial community. We remain committed to expanding participation, enhancing resource-sharing, and ensuring every 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneur has access to the tools needed to succeed.





142 Active Members

2035 Contributions



16 Subject Matter Experts

150+ Resources

Offering industry specific guidance in:
Finance | Operations | Marketing | Sales
Featuring:

- Interactive Q&A sessions
- Discussion threads
- Resource sharing
- Video lessons



Collaborative Partners



MyCEO

Betty and Glorie are the facilitators of our PRIDE in Entrepreneurship Business Plan Development Cohorts. Voted Top 15 Vancouver Business Coaches for two years in a row – 2023 & 2024!



Anti-Gravity Design Co.

Renée is a branding strategist who brings ideas to life through clear, creative visual communication. She developed the new brand for PRIDE in Entrepreneurship and supported their marketing.



Lys Glassford Consulting

Lys is skilled at building connections and sharing information in a clear, relatable way.



Client Testimonials



I appreciated the support and expertise shared in the Pride in Entrepreneurship program.

I valued the facilitator you provided and the tools she shared. Thanks again for the wonderful support that you and the Community Futures team provided.



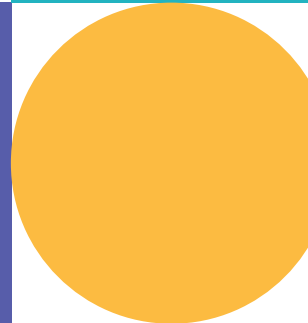
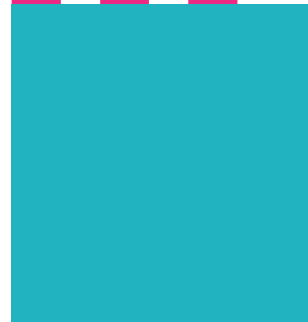
E.C. (they/them)



I first connected with Community Futures where an advisor helped me with business registration, planning and networking. Later, I attended workshops and received coaching, including support with social media, bookkeeping, and marketing. The guidance I received was amazing!



A.P.





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