



Futures Forward

Annual Report

September 2021 - August 2022



Who Are We?

Since 2013, Futures Forward has provided transitional services to youth aged 15 to 29 who have a history of Child and Family Services (CFS) involvement in Manitoba. Studies focused in North America have highlighted the impact that CFS involvement has on the lives of youth, and have consistently indicated less than favorable outcomes for those with experience in care. The goal of the Futures Forward program is to ensure that every youth with in care experience has:

- Skills, certifications, and resources needed to gain employment, either through employment based training or post-secondary education.
- Skills, confidence, and knowledge to make informed financial decisions and maintain a financial budget or plan.
- Skills, resources, and knowledge needed to manage their mental health, regulate their mood and independently navigate complex systems to achieve a desired outcome.

Futures Forward has a unique program model which brings together three distinct community agencies to offer a diverse continuum of specialized programming and services to youth in or from care. By working as a collaborative, participants are able to receive a variety of high quality services to help navigate their transition from care to interdependence. This targeted approach lets us cater our services and provide specialty support with each agency being able to provide their dedicated services to a targeted population.



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Manitoba and Winnipeg
Mental health for all



Who Are We?

Utilizing a youth-centered, participant-led approach, Futures Forward operates as both a support and resource hub to help meet participants where they are in their journey to interdependence. During the intake process, Futures Forward holistically assesses each participant and accounts for systematic, economic, and individual barriers to transitioning out of care. By offering a continuum of trauma-informed and research backed services, youth are able to engage with the program at their discretion and adjust their frequency of contact to match degree of need. The Futures Forward model also allows youth to access the service of any of the partner agencies on a short-term or long-term basis, to disconnect for any amount of time, and access services again. These critical services provide youth with the supports they need in order to engage in training programs, pursue post-secondary education, and/or gain fulfilling employment. The long-term effect of these supports is a reduction in the degree of reliance on social assistance programs.

Youth can be referred internally between the front-line staff at partner agencies and externally to community and government agencies, social support, justice services, and beyond.

The Futures Forward partnership allows for youth in or from care to access resources and supports that meet them where they are and advocate for their continued success. Whether it is as they work toward gaining employment, enrolling in education or training, or taking the smaller steps to get there, Futures Forward is here to support Manitoba's youth in or from care.

"Just the fact of not having to juggle everything all at once, the team there is super, super supportive, I can't be more grateful, it's amazing."

-2022 Participant on Futures Forward staff.



Since 1973, Youth Employment Services Manitoba (YES Manitoba) has provided free, inclusive employment and education support services to young Manitobans between the ages of 16 to 29. We empower youth by providing a safe, supportive environment where they can learn new skills, develop confidence in themselves, and feel supported in their transition to employment.

Young people (aged 15 to 29) who are not in employment, education, or training (NEET) are often considered to be more vulnerable than their peers, as they may face a risk of becoming disengaged or socially excluded and could miss out on gaining skills or experience in the labour market. This can have long term effects on their ability to transition successfully to interdependence in their community. Through our participant lead approach, we work to create opportunities for youth to become engaged members of their community through developing their employability skills, helping them gain meaningful employment, and exploring further education and training. Our purpose is to prepare youth in realizing their potential to become self-sufficient and contribute to our province's growth and prosperity.

YES Manitoba strives to stay current with trends in and changes to the employment market and supports youth seeking employment using a multilevel service approach. The team at YES Manitoba focuses on assisting youth to obtain and maintain employment by assessing participants' marketability; guiding them to appropriate choices including suitable employment opportunities, training programs, and/or education; exploring education and career opportunities; teaching participants to build strong résumés and cover letters; preparing them for interviews and on the job demands like workplace communication; and helping them build a strong repertoire of skills and resources to support them throughout their career journey.



Canadian Mental Health Association

Manitoba and Winnipeg

Mental health for all

Canadian Mental Health Association, Manitoba and Winnipeg (CMHA) is part of a national network of mental health serving agencies. Since formal incorporation in 1984, the goal of the Winnipeg regional office has been to honour and promote the mental health of all Manitobans and to support individuals who experience mental illness and addictions issues to achieve recovery and well-being within healthy and supportive communities.

CMHA's goal is "Mental Health for All," providing services and supports across the lifespan, including extensive youth focused programming. Offerings range from classroom based mental health promotion initiatives, cognitive behaviour therapy coaching for youth struggling with mood and anxiety difficulties, youth employment supports, family service navigation, education and support groups, co-produced youth courses, post-secondary mental health initiatives, and services for youth aging out of care. The philosophy at CMHA is "something for everyone," and the organization strives to offer high quality, evidence-based, accessible services to youth and their families.



COMMUNITY

Financial Counselling Services

Community Financial Counselling Services Inc. (CFCS) is a community-based non-profit organization that offers services to a diverse population of Manitobans experiencing a variety of financial challenges. CFCS provides free, accessible, respectful, responsive, and effective services to meet the unique and complex needs of individuals, couples, families, and communities in order to achieve financial wellbeing. The organization builds capacity through collaborative partnerships with other organizations and by advocating for accessible, affordable, and appropriate financial services for all Manitobans.

In addition to its role as a financial counselling service open to all Manitobans, as a publicly funded, community governed agency, CFCS is uniquely positioned relative to other debt management companies to address the needs of more vulnerable and high-risk populations such as youth, seniors, lower income individuals, people with disabilities, and gamblers. They are able to take the time to provide comprehensive financial counselling that takes into consideration the individual or families other concerns; to partner with other organizations in order to provide more integrated service delivery; and to focus some attention on community education and professional cross training that increase the preventive and access to service aspects of financial counselling and debt management.

2021–2022

Futures Forward Staff

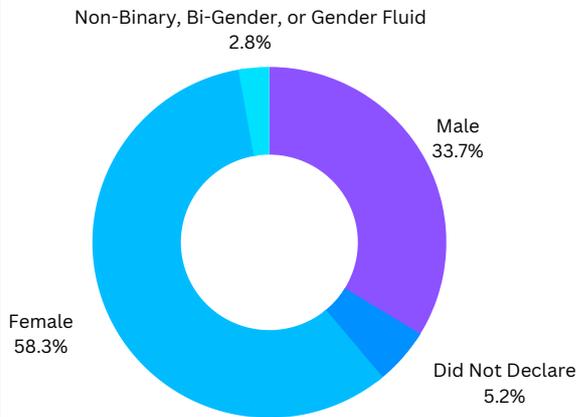
- Employment Facilitator - Chantelle Chernick
- Employment Facilitator - Mike Tarleton
- Financial Counsellor - Adetayo Makinde
- Financial Counsellor - Ashley Kaartinen
- Financial Counsellor - Holly Kielty
- Indigenous Youth Service Navigator - Angeline Peterson
- Indigenous Youth Service Navigator - Heaven Geller
- Post-Secondary Student Advisor - Samantha Olea
- Program Manager, CMHA - Levi Labelle
- Program Manager, CMHA - Stan Kipling
- Program Manager, YES - Caitlin Ashmore
- Project Manager, YES - Hafiz Jatto
- Mental Health Clinician - Gavin Patterson
- Mental Health Clinician - Steven Nero
- Outreach Coordinator - Evan Forest
- Student Support Case Manager - Christina McKay
- Student Support Case Manager - Sam Pothier
- Youth Service Navigator - Laura McNaughton

"Knowing that I have that support regardless of whatever is going on is enough for me. Knowing that I'm going to get a response and somebody is going to help me through whatever I'm going through is really major (...) I don't get the feeling I'm being dismissed or anything like that and I feel like I'm taken seriously, and I like that."

-Participant on Futures Forward staff

Who Are Our Clients

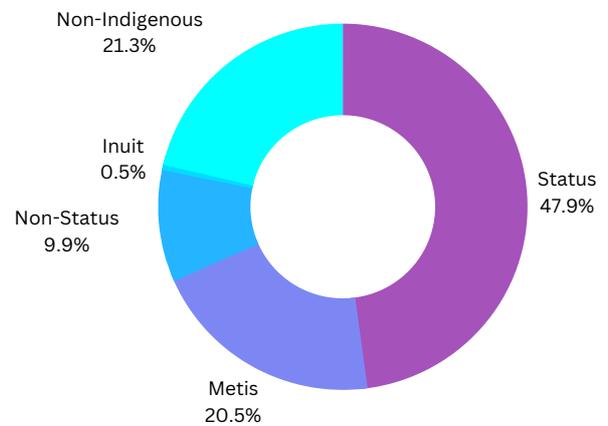
Participant Gender Identity



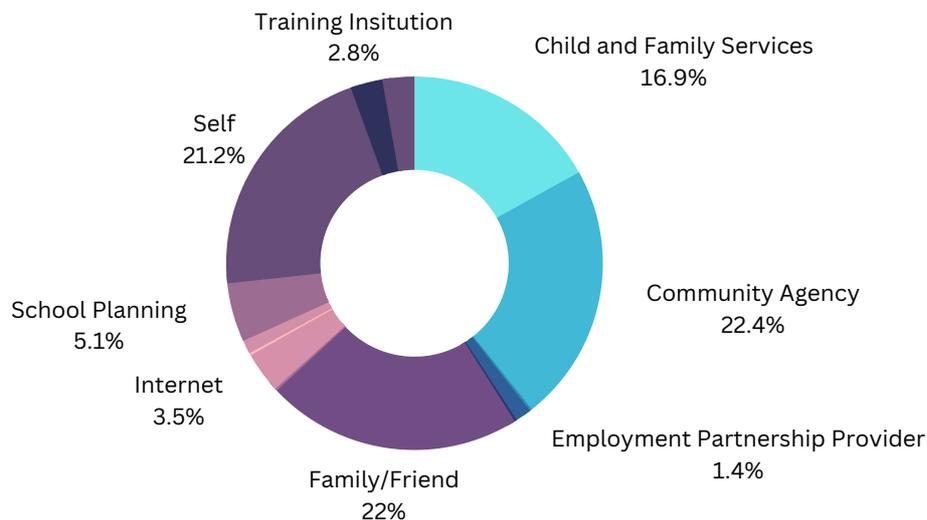
- In the 2021-2022 program year, Futures Forward had **668** participants reach us throughout the year
- **14.1%** of participants declared they were a visible minority
- **21.6%** of participants had dependents they were supporting

- **66.3%** of all Futures Forward participants identified as Indigenous (status, non-status, Metis, or Inuit)
- Majority of participants, **22.4%** found Futures Forward this year through a connection to another community agency

Participant Indigenous Status



How Participants are finding Futures Forward



Program Outputs

	2021-2022
New participants enrolled in Futures Forward	589
Carry-over participants enrolled in Futures Forward	96
Participants who accessed services from more than one agency	202
Participants supported in further education planning	131
Non-Tuition Waiver post-secondary funding appointments	249
Students supported through post-secondary funding applications	70
Education planning appointments	198
Employment plans created with participants	135
Participants receiving ongoing case management throughout the year	343
Service navigation support appointments	218
Housing support appointments	82
Participants who received support obtaining resources (ID's, bank accounts, etc)	55

Program Outputs

	2021-2022
Participants who attended mental health counselling appointments	44
Mental health related referrals	37
Individual mental health counselling appointments held	188
Financial plans developed for participants	22
Participants who attended financial counselling sessions	16
Financial counselling appointments held	43
Advancing Futures Bursary recipients who attended a financial planning workshop	121
Participants assisted with gaining required documents to file taxes	69
Participants who filed taxes through Futures Forward	68



Program Evaluation

In 2021-2022, Futures Forward hosted a variety of evaluation opportunities to connect with participants and gain their feedback on our services. As a program dedicated to serving youth and meeting them where they are, we looked at different ways to engage participants giving feedback.

Five focus groups were held throughout the year to ask current and former participants on their experiences with Futures Forward. **14 participants** were able to attend the focus group sessions. In order to further our reach, focus groups were held in a multitude of modes (**in person, online, and asynchronous**). Focus groups were facilitated with in-kind support of the Research and Evaluation Specialist at CMHA.

The goal of having evaluation built into programs is to be able to be reflective and responsive to the needs of Futures Forward participants. For example, the following was a comment made by a Focus Group participant in the spring of 2022 around the cultural programming offered at Futures Forward.

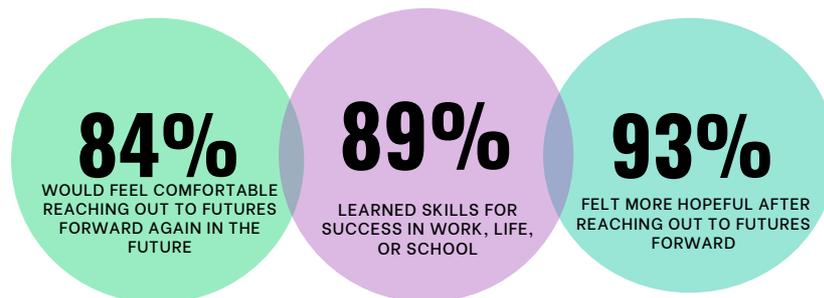
"If there was access to an Elder, and teachings, and ceremony (...) Indigenous crafts, lessons, teachings (...) I would access that, but there just hasn't been. There has always been talk that there will be but it's just never really happened." -Spring Focus Group Participant

As a direct response to this comment and similar feedback, a focus was then put on having regular cultural programming available to participants such as sharing circles, cultural crafting, sweat lodges, and medicine walks. Over the course of summer 2022, Futures Forward hosted **23 cultural events** in partnership with Huddle Broadway.

Futures Forward scored highly around participant satisfaction from focus group conversations and found positive themes around **mental health, financial aid, education, employment, external resources, and family support**.

Program Evaluation

Along with focus groups, **two online surveys** for feedback were administered this year. Overall, 117 participants responded to the surveys to give their feedback on their experiences with Futures Forward services.



"Futures forward (FF) changed my life as a youth in care aging out of the system was hard I had very little support except some friendly faces at futures forward. I was able to participate in a lot of their programs they helped me register for college back in 2017. It is 2022 and I just finally graduated college successfully With the help of a tuition waiver and education and training supports that FF got me connected with. I also got counselling [sic] supports which really changed my life and helped me heal and deal with some traumatic experiences I lived through. they helped me get multiple jobs even helped me into the step government program which changed my life."

-Participant Survey Feedback

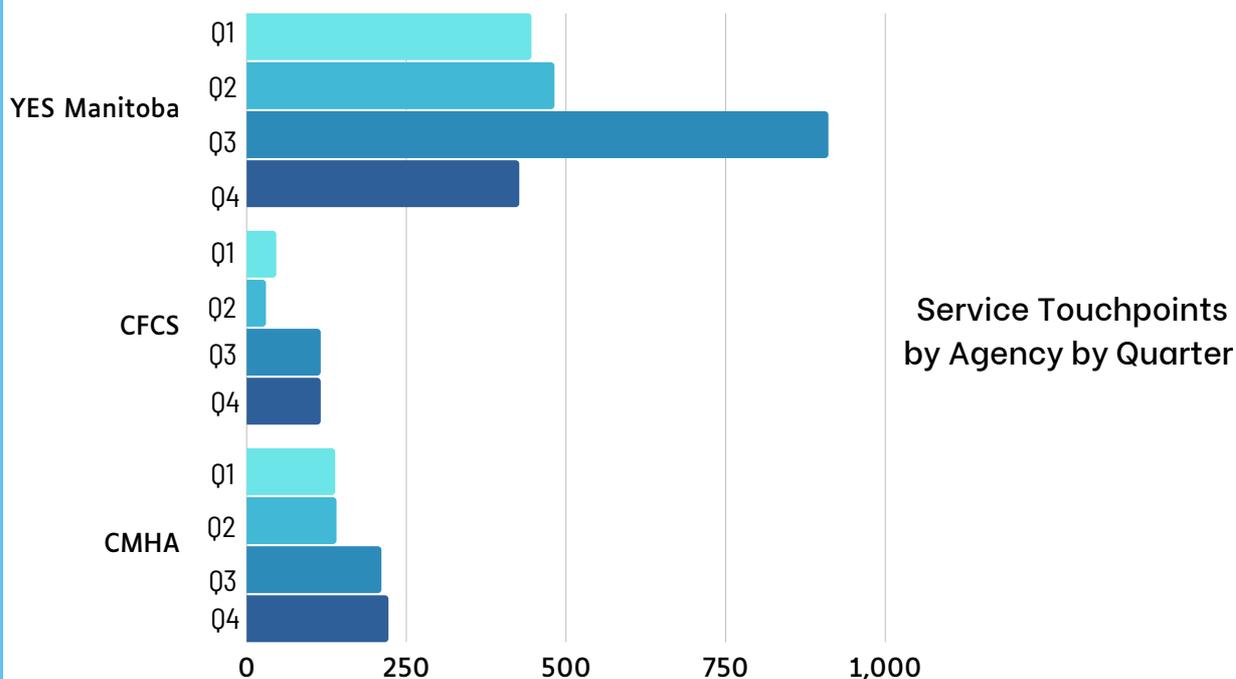
"The future doesn't look so great, so having the support of my financial needs from Ashley really really help and make me feel comfortable for money management, taxes and life information. This is a wonderful program, having stability is important"

-Participant Survey Feedback

Program Highlights

Futures Forward connects youth with services for employment, education, financial literacy, service navigation, and mental health. This year we served **668 participants**, with **202 participants** accessing multiple services through multiple agencies with Futures Forward.

In 2021-2022, we had a total of **3,276** touchpoints for services with Futures Forward participants across all three partner agencies.



Supporting Youth

Tuition Waiver Program

The Tuition Waiver program has been with Futures Forward for over seven years and it continues to grow with more students applying each year. Together with the support of various institutions across Manitoba and the Manitoba Government, the program is able to provide students with grants and bursaries that covers the cost of tuition and living supports, eliminating some of the financial barriers students may face pursuing education. This year we welcome a new institution to the Tuition Waiver program: Canadian Mennonite University is graciously able to offer tuition towards one student at a time to complete a program at their institution.

In the 2021-2022 academic year, **135 students** received Tuition Waiver supports, including 62 new students and 73 renewals to the waiver. **22 students graduated** by the end of the academic year.

In 2022, 187 students applied for a Tuition Waiver through the Post-Secondary Education Advisor. This was nine more applications than the previous year. As of August 2022, 126 students had their applications accepted for the 2022-2023 academic year. Of those, 56 were new students applying for their first year of the waiver and 61 were renewal students continuing their studies.

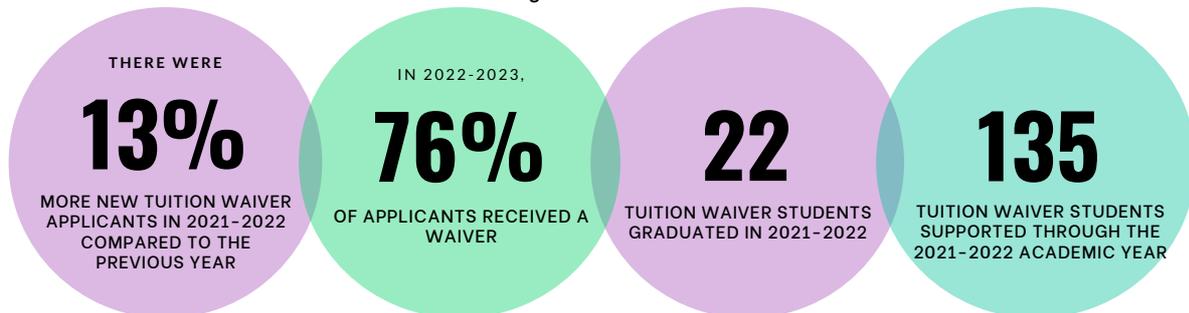
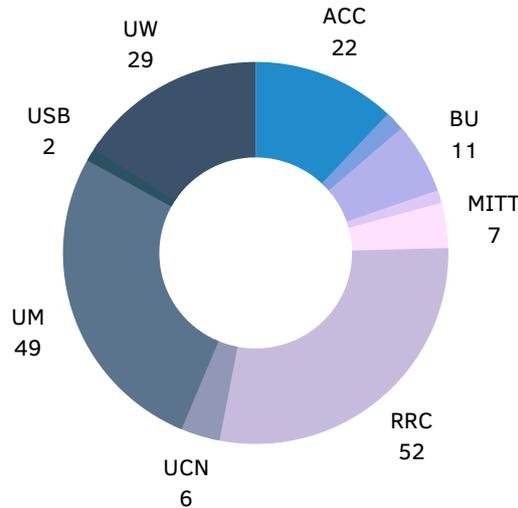
"The most important feature of Futures Forward is the tuition waiver. I think that [tuition] has always kind of been something that would block me from my highest potential and having that has really skyrocketed [my] everything (...) towards my dreams."

- Participant on the Tuition Waiver program

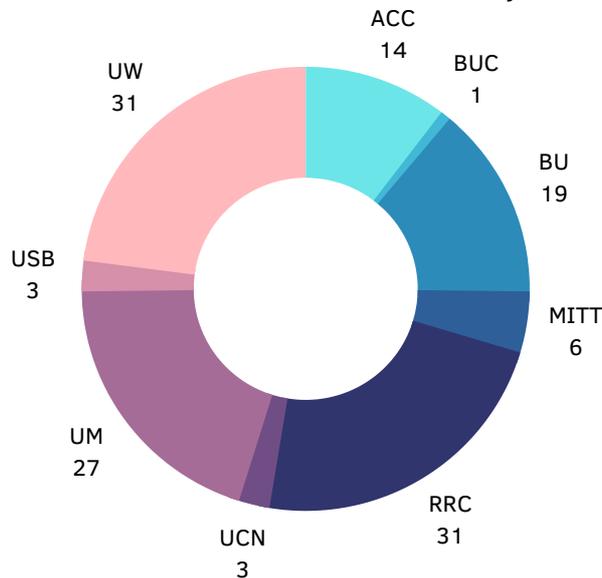
Supporting Youth

Tuition Waiver Program

2022 Tuition Waiver Applications By School



2021-2022 Tuition Waiver Students By School



ACC - Assiniboine Community College
 BU - Brandon University
 BUC - Booth University College

CMU - Canadian Mennonite University
 MITT - Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology
 RRC - Red River College

UCN - University College of the North
 UM - University of Manitoba
 USB - Universite de Saint Boniface
 UW - The University of Winnipeg

Supporting Youth

Tuition Waiver Program

	2021-2022
Tuition Waiver applications recieved	187
Tuition Waiver students referred to external organizations	17
Tuition Waiver students who accessed other Futures Forward services	41
Students supported in applying for a Tuition Waiver	161
Tuition Waiver students on an Agreement with Young Adults (AYA) referred to Workforce Training and Development (WTE) for living supports.	35
Tuition Waiver students referred for employment support through Futures Forward	10
Tuition Waiver students referred to external employment support (over 30)	22
Financial workshops or counselling sessions held for Tuition Waiver students	24
Tuition Waiver information appointments	140

Supporting Youth

Scholarships for Youth in Care

While the Tuition Waiver Program is important in being able to support youth in/from care going into post-secondary, Futures Forward also works to find other funding sources for students from care and connect them to opportunities.

The Advancing Futures Bursary is an annual bursary distributed by Economic Development, Investment and Trade (EDIT) and administered through Workplace Training and Employment (WTE). The Advancing Futures Bursary is directed towards current post-secondary students who are or have been in the care of Manitoba CFS. Futures Forward helped **165 participants** apply for the bursary, and on average recipients **\$7,808**.

The Keith Cooper Scholarship is an award directed towards youth who were in the care of CFS for at least one year, have applied or are enrolled in their first post-secondary program, and have demonstrated financial need, academic achievement, and a support system. This year Futures Forward led the selection committee for this award. **36 participants applied**, with 10 applicants chosen to receive the **\$1,000** award. 68% of applicants were currently or previously a permanent ward of CFS.

In order to help youth see post-secondary as more affordable, each year Futures Forward publishes a scholarship guide. The guide includes sponsorship options, provincial supports, opportunities for current and former youth in care, opportunities for Indigenous students, and other scholarship or award opportunities. The 2022 Scholarship Guide was the 11th edition and summarizes **52 scholarships available to youth**, along with a calendar of the application due dates throughout the year.

Supporting Youth

Access to Services

As a collaborative program, Futures Forward aims to provide access to as many services as possible to support youth in or from care. From our three partner agencies we are able to provide services around employment, education, mental health, service navigation, and financial literacy. Futures Forward also builds connections with other agencies across the Manitoba to ensure that if there is a need we cannot support internally, we are able to help refer participants to other organizations and services to get the help they need.

As pandemic public health restrictions lifted throughout 2022, Futures Forward was able to continue to provide hybrid services to meet participants where they are. An online registration form allowed participants to sign themselves up for Futures Forward programming and be immediately directed to the most relevant services. Many participants continue to take advantage of virtual appointments, as it mitigated barriers they may have regarding transportation. Having access to Futures Forward staff through digital means, such as the staff Facebook pages, also allows participants to reach out in whichever method they feel most comfortable.

202

PARTICIPANTS ACCESSED
MORE THAN ONE FUTURES
FORWARD AGENCY

66

REFERRALS MADE TO
AGENCIES OUTSIDE OF
FUTURES FORWARD

152

CONNECTIONS MADE WITH
OTHER YOUTH SERVING
ORGANIZATIONS

63

CONNECTIONS MADE WITH
RURAL MANITOBA SCHOOLS
OR ORGANIZATIONS

Supporting Youth

Indigenous Cultural Events

Manitoba has the highest rate of children involved in child and family services with approximately 10,000 children. Within that population 91% identify as First Nations, Metis, or Inuit. **66.3% of Futures Forward participants in 2021-2022 identified as Indigenous** (First Nations, Inuit, or Metis.)

In order to best serve our participants, Futures Forward, with in kind support from CMHA's Circle of Spirit and Reconciliation, was able to provide a variety of culturally safe programming for participants. From teaching with Elders, sweat lodges, crafting, and medicine walks, it's important youth from care have the opportunity to connect with their culture – or have an opportunity to commit to Truth and Reconciliation through their own learning.

57

CULTURAL CEREMONIES
HELD

120

HOURS OF CULTURAL
PROGRAMMING

130

UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS
ATTENDED

9

CONNECTIONS WITH
INDIGENOUS-LED
ORGANIZATIONS



Connecting With Youth

Youth Advisory Committee

As a way to keep the youth we serve at the forefront of what we do, Futures Forward engages with a voluntary group of youth in or from care to make sure their voices have a place in our program. This year the youth advisory council (YAC) **met 11 times** over the course of the program year.

As a youth led program, the goal is to have participants leading the way on what they want and need to get out of their involvement. This year the YAC covered a variety of topics from skill development, community engagement, guest speakers, and much more. Regularly between two to five participants came and engaged in the meeting to speak on their perspectives and connect with others.

Scholars Nights

Scholars Night is an ongoing event hosted by the Student Support Case Manager for current or former youth in care who are attending a post-secondary institution. The intent of the meet ups is to build a network of support for students of those with similar lived experiences. It is also a great way for Futures Forward staff to stay connected with youth in between the times they need help with applications or funding.

Six Scholars Nights were held virtually in 2021-2022, many including skill or personal development to help support students through school. Scholars also have access to a specific Facebook group and are shared relevant updates and services from Futures Forward staff.



Supporting Youth

Backpacks for Back to School

As students were preparing to head back to school for September, through the additional financial support from YES Manitoba, Futures Forward was able to provide Backpack Bundles for Back to School for the second year in a row. **54 students reached out for the opportunity**, and we were able to provide 24 participants with backpack bundles. This is a **92% increase** in demand from last years backpack requests.

Each new backpack contained post-it notes, notebooks, highlighters, pens, snacks, binders, dividers, pencils, a pencil case, and some free gifts from YES Manitoba to help students prepare to head back to the classroom.



7

RECIPIENTS WERE
ATTENDING COLLEGE

17

RECIPIENTS WERE
ATTENDING UNIVERSITY

6

RECIPIENTS WERE IN THEIR
FIRST YEAR OF POST-
SECONDARY

Connecting With Youth

Other Outreach Activities

	2021-2022
Youth Advisory Council social media posts	31
Futures Forward newsletter recipients	1,087
Social media posts made relating to mental health, service navigation, basic needs, and holistic wellness	971
Social Media posts relating to financial literacy through “Money Talk Mondays“	44
Advancing Futures Bursary and Keith Cooper Award committee meetings attended	10
Youth serving agencies trained to offer income tax services to youth in or from care	5
Presentations and workshops provided	166
School presentations and workshops provided	33
Unique presentation participants	1,202
Rural Manitoba schools or youth serving agencies connected to	63

Celebrating Youth

Holiday Party 2021

In 2021, Futures Forward hosted its annual holiday party virtually for the second year in a row.

Participants across the province were able to sign up to receive a holiday meal delivery to their homes for them and their loved ones. Then the Futures Forward team gathered online with participants to celebrate, play games, and raffle off prizes.



39 participants won donated prizes for the event that came in the forms of gift cards, admission tickets, or framed Eagle Feathers.

In addition to the holiday party, 435 participants were mailed a post card from Futures Forward wishing them a wonderful holiday season and happy new year from all the staff at Futures Forward.



Celebrating Youth

Scholars From Care Graduation

For the second year in a row, Futures Forward partnered with VOICES: Manitoba's Youth in Care Network to hold two celebrations in honor of the graduates from both high school and post-secondary this past year.

On August 3, 2022 at the Victoria Inn in Winnipeg, we hosted 14 scholars with their friends and family. In total, 31 guests came out to show their support through our program and luncheon. Each student received a certificate of appreciation, along with a gift bag containing a donation from VOICES, MACY, and Futures Forward. The event kicked off with greetings from Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY) Elder Cheryl Alexander. Graduates heard from Member of Legislative Assembly Janice Morley-Lecomte, representatives of VOICES and Futures Forward, the CEO of the General Authority of Child and Family Services Jay Rodgers, and most importantly from the graduates themselves.

On August 17 we held a virtual graduation event to celebrate those who could not attend the in-person event. Four graduates came and were honoured, received credits to order a lunch, and celebrated with the staff of VOICES and Futures Forward. We talked about tips for students and celebrated successes. Graduates were also sent their certificates and gift bags following the online event.



Participant Stories

Participant A became involved with Futures Forward through participating in the Indigenous Programming organized by the Indigenous Youth Service Navigator (IYSN). After building rapport, the youth disclosed being homeless and recently overcoming addictions to meth and alcohol on their own, but felt it was very challenging to maintain sobriety alone. The IYSN was able to help Participant A **become involved in cultural programming** and was also provided a reference to the Community Housing with Supports program (CHS) at CMHA. The IYSN helped to facilitate this process between CHS and Participant A, which after several months **led to Participant A being successfully housed**. During this time the IYSN also was able to help Participant A **get into the detox program at Main Street Project** and to develop a plan for substance use treatment with Addictions Foundation of Manitoba through the Street Reach program at Huddle Broadway. IYSN was also able to help Participant A **begin applying for necessary ID's and getting enrolled with Harvest Manitoba**. Participant A expressed sincere gratitude for helping them get back on their feet and feels hopeful for future.

Participant B recently moved back to Winnipeg. They were looking for assistance on finding work in Winnipeg again, and reached out to Futures Forward through YES Manitoba. The participant had experience in manufacturing, support work, and kitchen industries. Participant B initially stated that they were interested in applying for support work positions. **After discussing their career goals and aspirations** with the Employment Facilitator though, they confessed that they did not truly enjoy support work but thought that they were most likely to find work in that field. They also said that they had really enjoyed their past work in manufacturing and wanted to explore the opportunities that could be found here in Winnipeg. Working with the Employment Facilitator, they received **assistance in reformatting their existing resume and began job searching** with them. The participant also received support in writing cover letters with proper structure, and how to message employers to apply. Together with the support of their Employment Facilitator, they applied for a production role within an industrial bakery. The participant seemed excited about this opportunity, as it **fit what they were looking for and aligned with their existing skills and experience**. They received an interview request a few days later, and were **immediately hired**. Since the last time their Employment Facilitator reached out, they are still happily employed and working full time.

Participant Stories

Participant C is a previous participant of Futures Forward and they reached out again wanting to get their income taxes filed through CFCS. Futures Forward Financial Counsellors filed the youth's 2020 return with them, **leading to an increased income of GST, and an income tax refund.** Their Financial Counsellor then explained all of the Futures Forward services again, and they **indicated an interest in financial counselling sessions** to help learn all they can about money and finances, as they had not learned this anywhere before. The participant has had a few financial counselling sessions teaching budgeting and **continued to meet with their Financial Counsellor on an ongoing basis.** The participant was also referred to Futures Forward supports at CMHA for help getting ID and to our Futures Forward Education Team at YES Manitoba to help them make a plan to finish high school.

Participant D reached out to Futures Forward about counselling supports available to them. They set up a time to meet with the Mental Health Clinician to complete a counselling intake. During the intake process, Participant D identified various circumstances why they sought out counselling, such as to learn better **coping mechanisms**, learn about **addictions support**, talk about their **family relationships**, and help **explore their sexual identity.** The participant faces a lot of personal challenges in their life such as fighting with parents, low-income household, dealing with past trauma, addiction, and struggling to understand their sexual identity. They wanted someone to talk through figuring it out with. During sessions, conflict resolution was discussed and a referral to the Addictions Foundations of Manitoba was offered. They also learned about various coping skills that can help in challenging circumstances. Participant D reported feeling like these sessions were beneficial, that **they were able to apply their learnings in their life**, and that they felt heard and supported through their struggles with their sexual identity by the Mental Health Clinician. They felt they were able to use the coping skills to reduce their drug use, learned conflict resolution when it comes to their parents, and finally able to open up about their past trauma to be able to work through it. Participant D **wants to continue their sessions, and already feels like their life has improved due to this program.**

Participant Stories

Participant E is a new Futures Forward participant who was unfamiliar with the various services offered through the program. They are currently in care, and wanted **more information on funding options for education**, as they are interested in a Massage Therapy program to start in September and they wanted to think ahead. After hearing about other Futures Forward services, they were excited to take advantage of many of the resources offered. They booked **multiple mock interview appointments** with the Employment Facilitator, looked into some other **funding options and filled out a band funding application** with the Post-Secondary Student Advisor, and **looked into more volunteer opportunities** to build their skills. The participant has since let Futures Forward know they were accepted in their program of choice and will also be receiving band funding to help pay for school in the fall.

Participant F is a new client who reached out to receive help filing their income taxes for this year. They explained that along with **filing their income taxes**, they recently had to move and need help updating their address with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). **They received help from Futures Forward to update their address and file their 2021 taxes**, the Financial Counsellor also took note of the clients age and suggested they file their 2020 taxes to receive some additional money. Participant F ended up receiving a lot more money than they hoped for and were grateful for the suggestion to file their previous tax year. This money will make a big difference to the participant in being able to support their basic needs. The Financial Counsellor then also **referred Participant F to Futures Forward staff at CMHA for services that they are interested in pursuing** but did not previously know about, with Participant F having previously only received services from YES Manitoba. They expressed gratitude for being supported and fit in to file their taxes on short notice.

Participant Stories

Participant G has been working with the Futures Forward Mental Health Clinician since March 2022. During their assessment the participant stated that they were struggling with relationships, anxiety, as well as self-harm. Recently, they expressed that they have a lot of anger towards others and about their past experiences and that they do not know how to handle their anger well. For Participant G, in the past their anger has led them to punching holes in their bedroom walls and self-harming instead. Since disclosing the anger management issues to the Mental Health Clinician, they have been able to work on **various anger management tools and skills** such as muscle relaxation and grounding. During these sessions, the participant was **given a safe space** to practice these skills with the Mental Health Clinician. As a result of their time spent diligently learning and practicing these skills when they are angry, Participant G has not punched a hole in their wall or hurt anyone that has provoked them to anger. Recently, Participant G has reached out to clinician and said **“I like coming to talk to you** and the muscle relaxation skill the best because I am able to calm down when I am mad.”

Participant H is a current Grade 12 student in care, who recently applied for a Tuition Waiver. They approached the Education team asking for **support on their post-secondary application**. The transcript supplied by their high school to the University of Manitoba showed missing assignments, so their grades were inadequate for direct entry into their chosen program. The Futures Forward Outreach Coordinator was able to work with the participant, their guidance counsellor, and the University of Manitoba admissions department to get up-to-date grades and **advocate for their application to be reconsidered for direct entry**. Participant H has now been offered – and accepted – direct entry into their program, and is continuing to work with the Education team. They plan to work together to **help the participant with course planning and looking into various funding options**, including the Canada Learning Bond and Manitoba Student Aid.

Participant Stories

Participant J recently completed four financial counselling sessions with a Financial Counsellor and was able to earn the \$100 for participation. The participant really enjoyed the workbook provided, and found that it **brought a lot of new information to their attention they would not have thought of otherwise**, especially surrounding loans and borrowing money. The spending plan exercise in the sessions also helped the participant reaffirm what they already knew about income and expenses. **It gave them a tool to practice budgeting for themselves** and their future, and they appreciated being able to personalize it to meet the needs of their unique situation. The money habitudes card sort was an interactive way to go over money management, so much so the participant wanted to take the cards home to do with their partner and keep the conversation going. Through their appointments, Participant J really appreciated working with their Futures Forward Financial Counsellor, and said **they might not have continued the session if they had a different financial counsellor**. They really appreciated the understanding and flexibility provided by the financial counsellor, and the set-up of the sessions overall. They appreciated having a mix of homework, the workbook, and be able to sit down and talk through their finances with someone. They also appreciated the flexibility of being able to meet for virtual appointments, as it suited their situation better. **The participant plans to continue to meet with their financial counsellor at the beginning of each month in order to make it easier to track their spending.**

Participant K is a Tuition Waiver student who expressed to the Futures Forward Student Support Case Manager during a check-in that they would like to attend financial literacy sessions with our Financial Counsellors. They disclosed they had a fair amount of debt between student loans and other consumer debt, and wanted to learn some money management skills to help get themselves on track. The participant was **referred between Futures Forward staff** from YES Manitoba to CFCS, and is being supported to **make a debt plan** to pay down their debt and also **start emergency savings**. They were able to pay off one credit card entirely since meeting with their Financial Counsellor and continue to learn budgeting skills. The participant has also made **plans to learn how to file their income taxes on their own** as a goal for their own financial management.

Participant Quotes

"Thank you for checking in, I'm still employed at my current job but building my resume with Chelsey was so helpful and has made me feel so much more confident in my job search. I'm currently working to utilize the other resources I have with YES and have booked an appointment with the mental health counsellor. I really appreciate the help I'm offered with you guys. And I am planning to complete my high school GED this fall! My meeting with Sam O inspired me and I feel a lot of the nervousness and hesitation alleviated. The schooling option that was be most suitable for me wasn't open to new students at the time but come fall they should be reopening registration so I'm excited! Thanks again for reaching out and I'll let you know how everything goes!"

- Participant E-Mail

"I have been a tuition waiver scholarship recipient for three years and I have finally graduated from University College of the North in The Pas, Manitoba! I wanted to make sure that Futures Forward received some grad photos!"

- Participant E-Mail



Participant Quotes

“4 years ago, I randomly came across an email at work about the Futures Forward tuition waiver for former youth in care. At that time, I hardly had enough gas money to drive from Selkirk to Winnipeg and get to work. Every time I called in sick, it was because I couldn't afford the gas to get there especially as a newly separated mother. So embarrassing to explain to your boss, but he was so understanding.

I applied for Tuition Waiver and was accepted and it legitimately changed my life. I quit my job, moved to the city and started working on a university degree. No regrets. The support that I have received from the Futures Forward team has been incredible, beyond my wildest dreams. The university experience would not have been possible without Futures Forward and that random email.

Those network emails are important!! Sharing knowledge about community resources is important!! Sharing posts on Facebook is important!! You never know. And sometimes you just need to apply, even if you're not sure or if you don't think you will be accepted.

You never know.”

-Participant Facebook Post

Program Challenges

Housing Support

Throughout the year, the need for dedicated housing support through Futures Forward was evident across all three partner agencies. Many participants are unable to focus on other aspects of transitioning to successful interdependence with insecure housing placements. While Youth Service Navigators at CMHA are able to support participants in their housing search, emergency housing supports are not currently in the scope of Futures Forward activities and the demand continues to be high for service navigation support.

Navigating career development and financial independence is difficult when young people are struggling to meet their basic needs. The need for immediate housing supports and rapid rehoming of individuals at risk of homelessness has been significant. There are simply not enough opportunities for youth to access housing quickly, particularly when they are new to completing a housing search.

Additional needs have included a need for immediate food access, transportation supports with bus tickets to get to and from necessary appointments, and several requests for home visits to provide onsite mental health support.

Mental Health and Life Skills

Across all agencies, we saw participants missing appointments or disengaging from the program due to their mental health needs. Participants themselves would discuss their struggles and how it was impacting multiple areas of their lives, and became a struggle to fully engage in their own development through Futures Forward during stressful periods. As a participant-led program, we want to be able to support youth in a holistic way, but that makes it difficult when they disengage and the demand for mental health services outweighs current capacity.

This extends as well into the needs we are seeing for life skill development in participants. Whether in communication, time management, or other basic skills, program staff are finding the needs of participants growing. We need to be aware of this in order to be a responsive program going forward and provide services that meet participants where they are at and help them grow.

Program Challenges

Outreach and Visibility

While Futures Forward strives to have more visibility in the community and many successful outreach efforts are done, we still see a number of partners and participants commenting that they wish they had found us sooner. Many of Futures Forward's clients find us based on referrals from other agencies (26%) or CFS authorities (16%), and within those connections we've identified that there needs to be more uniformity of information given to partners. A goal for the program going forward is to strengthen these connections within CFS agencies to help ensure Futures Forward continues to be a vital part of support services for youth in and from care.

We also saw an increase in the need for services outside of Winnipeg, particularly in remote and Northern communities, where there are less community resources available to participants. While technology is able to help connect us across the province, there are still participants that feel closed off from other program services due to communication and transportation challenges. The budget for travel through Futures Forward has been limiting in staffs ability to connect outside of Winnipeg.

Capacity

There was a clear increase in demand for Futures Forward services that frequently saw participants having increased wait times for services. This, combined with the ongoing impact of COVID-19, saw certain staff at capacity for their ability to assist participants. Wait times for service navigation, mental health counselling, and employment services in particular saw an increase at certain times of the year. At times, there was a wait of up to two weeks to schedule an appointment with a front-line staff member, and many participants see it as a significant barrier when they require immediate assistance.

While each agency does its best to provide in-kind support to supplement staff capacity at peak times, especially for employment services and mental health support, the sustainability of the program does require an increase of investment in these two areas as well as administrative support.

Thank You to everyone who makes Futures Forward possible!

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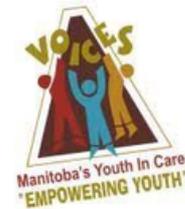
CANADIAN MUSEUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



Benito Premium Meats



Folklorama



Canadian Mental Health Association
Manitoba and Winnipeg
Mental health for all



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



COMMUNITY
Financial Counselling Services

Tuition Waiver Partner Institutions



University College of the North



MANITOBA INSTITUTE OF TRADES & TECHNOLOGY



ASSINIBOINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



BRANDON UNIVERSITY



University of Manitoba



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG



BOOTH UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Université de Saint-Boniface

RRC POLYTECH

CMU
CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY