

# SERVICE NAVIGATION & ACCESS TO SUPPORTS

An Overview from the CIF Impact Report

## COMMUNITIES BUILDING YOUTH FUTURES (CBYF)

Tamarack Institute's Communities Building Youth Futures (CBYF) is a five-year initiative funded by the Government of Canada's Supports for Student Learning Program\* that operates in 20 rural, remote, and/or Indigenous communities across the country. The goal of CBYF is to develop community-wide strategies to support youth (aged 15 – 30) to graduate high school and successfully transition to post-secondary, training or employment. Each CBYF community receives core funding and capacity building support from Tamarack to develop and implement their local action plan.

## COMMUNITY INNOVATION FUND (CIF)

CBYF communities are eligible to apply annually for one-year Community Innovation Fund (CIF) grants. These grants enable local CBYF initiatives to achieve “quick wins” on pressing issues while balancing the deep work of addressing the priorities of their community's youth. After the first year of implementing CBYF in communities, six domains emerged to address barriers to academic and employment success faced by youth. The six themes have been structured into six overviews, focusing specifically on the impacts of 40 CIF grants distributed between 2020 and 2023. All overviews will be updated to include data from the final year as it becomes available.

## SERVICE NAVIGATION & ACCESS TO SUPPORTS

Accessing services can be a stigmatizing and emotionally vulnerable experience for youth, compounded by the fact that many young people do not know what services are available to them. CIF initiatives focused on integrating existing service providers, mental health supports, and adult mentors to create holistic ‘webs of support’ that helped youth overcome multiple barriers to success.

## COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES

- Youth don't know what services are available or don't know how to access them.
- Gaps or barriers in adult support and advocacy while navigating the system.
- Accessing services may bring up trauma from youth or stigma from service providers.

**While 13 initiatives addressed service navigation, the projects on the following page focused most specifically on this theme.**

## INITIATIVES ADDRESSING SERVICE NAVIGATION

### Future North

*Sudbury, ON*

Youth in Sudbury designed a website that connected youth with local service providers in their area, including information about how to access each one. In a second CIF initiative, youth leaders travelled to nearby areas to share their learnings with other young people.

### Channeling Youth Voices

#### Documentary

*Chilliwack, BC*

Chilliwack youth worked together to create a documentary about their experiences of poverty, homelessness, and mental illness. Youth had the opportunity to speak as experts on their own experiences to local changemakers.

### Transportation Project

*Digby, NS*

Provided funding for youth to travel to school and work as transportation is a significant access barrier in the community.

### Pihtikwe: Beyond the Doorstep

*Prince Albert, SK*

Youth leaders increased the accessibility of youth-focused services by filming interviews with local service providers and including information on how to access each service. In a second CIF initiative, youth leaders incorporated their learnings into an app.

## COMMUNITY IMPACTS OF THE CIF PROJECTS

- 1,642 youth** across 13 initiatives worked to improve service access for youth in their communities.
- Over 2,000 youth** engaged directly with local service providers and other changemakers or became changemakers themselves because of CIF projects.
- 404 youth** were able to access education, employment, and local services because of the Digby Transportation Project.
- Youth in Chilliwack who had prior negative experiences with local services were able to use the supportive relationships they found within Chilliwack's CIF project to successfully re-engage with those services.
- All 40 CIF initiatives** involved direct community involvement including local mentors and service providers. Each community continued to build supportive relationships with youth after the one-year funding window.