

BIGGER THAN OUR BUSINESS



ballad

Annual Impact Report 2023-2024

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Thank You!

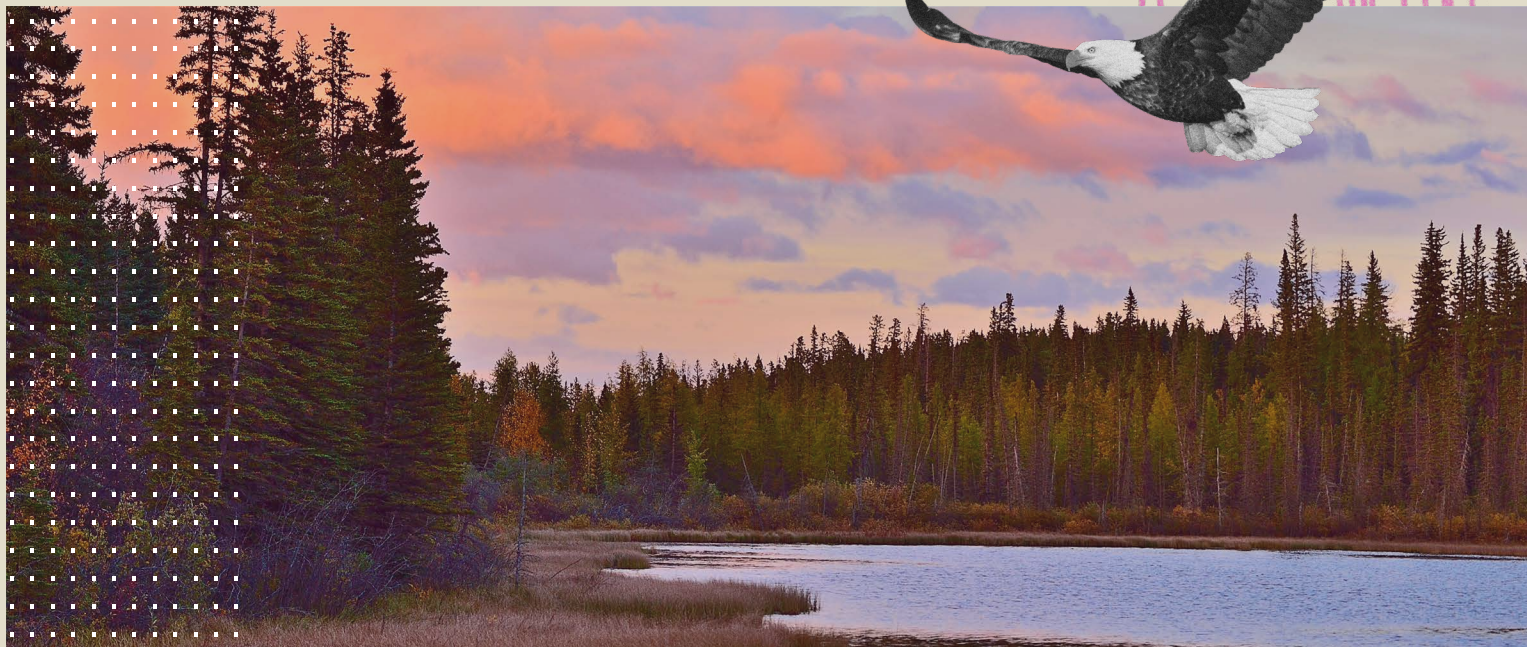
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Land Acknowledgement

Ballad would like to recognise and acknowledge the geographical and ancestral locations of Ballad's offices across the province. Our office locations are nestled in the foothills, boreal forests and grasslands of Treaty 6, 7 and 8 Territory. These Nations have been deeply connected to this land for time immemorial. This is also the homeland of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

As inhabitants of Treaty territory, we acknowledge the role we have played in colonization and our continuous responsibilities as treaty people. We respect the diverse history, languages and cultures whose presence continues to influence and enrich our vibrant Ballad community.

We would also like to acknowledge the non-human inhabitants of these lands and watersheds and we recognise our own vital interdependence on these natural systems.





Message from the Managing Partner

At Ballard, we're proud of the meaningful work we do each day to empower resilient people, communities and businesses. To further enhance this important work, we've spent the past year focusing on and investing in social impact as a core business function.

Our focus and investments related to social impact have been in a wide variety of areas, including:

- Enhancement of Ballard's ACE values to include social and environmental performance
- Creation of a new social impact position and corresponding organization-wide strategy
- The addition of specific company priorities and goals related to social impact
- The delivery of diverse workforce development programs, with reach and positive impact for numerous people across the province

I'm inspired and motivated by what our team has accomplished this year. I'm excited to present Ballard's first annual impact report that highlights many of these successes. The Ballard team, in partnership with our many clients and participants, has supported skill development, meaningful employment and economic resilience for over 1247 participants this year. We have supported over 46 communities to achieve their vision for the future through our consulting services. It is clear that we have made significant strides in improving the economic well-being of the clients and communities that we work with.

As we mark 12 years of this important work together, I look forward with excitement to many opportunities that we'll have to continue this work and take on new impact initiatives.

John Corie
Managing Partner

BALLAD'S CORE VALUES:

Accountable: Deliver exceptional services / Be committed to positive social and environmental impact

Collaborative: Be a team player / build meaningful and inclusive relationships

Entrepreneurial: Be willing to innovate and implement creative solutions / nourish the entrepreneurial spirit

Impact Top 10 Highlights

Here are our top ten impact highlights from the 2023-2024 year.



1

Engaged over **3962 community members** in consulting projects, to better reflect their vision for the future.

2

Delivered **13** industry-responsive workforce development programs across the province, with **92%** targeting equity deserving groups.

3

Conducted a supplier review and introduced a new vendor application form incorporating social and environmental performance criteria. Currently, **37%** of our suppliers are locally based.

4

Served over **1247** clients through Workforce Development (WFD) programs, achieving a **74%** program completion rate supporting our commitment to empowering individuals and supporting their long-term reattachment to the workforce.

5

Submitted our BCorp certification application.

6

Achieved top eNPS scores of **58** and **50**!

7

Successfully developed and piloted the Circle of Resilience evaluation tool in WERC, ESTS and Youth Programs. With **80% of participants increasing in 2 or more resilience categories.**

8

Continued mandatory Indigenous Awareness Training for all staff, and implemented new Trauma-informed Care and Motivational Interviewing Training for WFD staff with a **77%** completion rate.

9

Launched Ballard's first comprehensive impact strategy, defining clear goals and metrics for driving positive social and environmental change.

10

Secured new strategic partnerships to transform the work we do including Olds College of Agriculture and Technology, and Bow Valley College.



Ballad's Social Impact

Ballad is a purpose-driven business. Since 2012, in every project and every program, we strive to make an impact. However, to solidify this work, in 2023 Ballad invested in social impact (SI) as a core initiative and business function. We identified four impact commitments where we think we can make real change:

1.

Begin with Ballad

Optimize the positive impact and reduce the negative impact created through our day-to-day business and operating decisions.

2.

Resilient and Employable Workforce

Long-term reattachment to the workforce and increased capacity to be resilient to economic vulnerability.

3.

Empowered and Prosperous Communities

Thriving and prosperous businesses and communities that are empowered to pursue their long-term vision.

4.

Scaling Impact and Transforming The Ecosystem

Concerted knowledge mobilization and relationship building for industry advancement.

This annual impact report details our advancements in each of our commitments. We made significant progress across all areas and were ambitious in our activities, recognizing that many initiatives will extend beyond the fiscal year. This year, we built a solid foundation to grow our impact and continue our mission to empower resilient people, communities, and businesses.

Ballad Impact Map

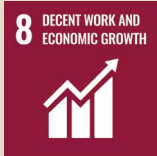


	BEGIN WITH BALLAD	RESILIENT AND EMPLOYABLE WORKFORCE	EMPOWERED AND PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES	SCALING IMPACT AND TRANSFORMING THE ECOSYSTEM
ACTIVITIES: <i>What are we doing to bring about change?</i>	Delivery of all corporate activities including operations, marketing, human resources, finance and governance	Delivery of integrated-training, micro-credentials, and employment readiness workforce development programs.	Delivery of community development, economic development and business advisory consulting services for clients.	Building strategic partnerships and sharing knowledge to advance the future of work and community economic development.
OUTPUTS: <i>What are the immediate results of the activities? (take-up, awareness, quality, quantify, access)</i>	Enhanced policies, tools, and processes to consider environmental and social implications.	Increased industry specific skills, soft skills and work experiences to obtain meaningful employment in their desired career pathway.	Support businesses and communities in implementing locally-based solutions that inform future decision-making.	Alignment of mission with strategic partners within the ecosystem.
OUTCOMES: <i>What will change in the medium term? (behaviour, condition, attitude, performance, capacity)</i>	Increased positive impact and reduced negative impact created through our day-to-day business and operating decisions.	Long-term reattachment to the workforce and increased capacity to be resilient to economic vulnerability.	Thriving and prosperous businesses and communities that are empowered to pursue their long-term vision.	Concerted knowledge mobilization and relationship building for industry advancement.
IMPACT: <i>What is the desired change?</i>	Improved socioeconomic conditions, economic resiliency and self-sufficiency for Canadians.			

Sustainable Development Goals Impact Alignment

Our work is aligned with the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Canadian SDG Framework, adopted in 2015 by all 193 UN member states.

We believe it is important that this work is aligned with external systems, policies, government approaches, and initiatives for the greatest cross-sectoral and collective impact in improving local capacities. In addition, it allows for a shared language and measurement system with our community, industry, and government partners. Ballad's Social Impact (SI) strategy has identified seven goals it is in alignment with (below).



1.

Begin with Ballad

SCOPE:

All corporate activities including operations, marketing, human resources, finance, and governance.

DESIRED CHANGE:

Optimize the positive impact and reduce the negative impact created through our day-to-day business and operating decisions.

IMPACT MANAGEMENT

In the first year of operation the foundation for impact management was created. The key activities that were successfully completed included:

- Created a new Senior Manager of Impact role with defined core accountabilities.
- Completion of the first Social Impact Strategy and first Annual Impact Report.
- An impact database and scorecard version 1 was created to catalog all of the impact indicators and sources. Due to the number of programs and locations we experienced challenges in rolling up all impact data into one scorecard. This will be a priority for the next fiscal year as we build off the foundation that has been created.

- Updated Ballad's core values to include social and environmental performance.

Professional Development

Members of senior management pursued professional development to strengthen our impact measurement and management process. This included the completion of the:

- Social Impact Measurement Community of Practice 10-week program delivered by the Canadian Community Economic Development Network and Social Innovation Canada.
- Social Return on Investment (SROI) training delivered by Social Value Canada.

BCORP CERTIFICATION

This year we submitted a BCorp certification application, and we're proud to announce that we were recently awarded certification. This certification demonstrates our commitment to the highest standards of environmental and social performance, accountability and transparency. We scored the highest in the customers and workers section, with the most area of improvement in the environment section. We are now apart of a global community of B Corp businesses where we can benefit from industry benchmarking, learning opportunities and like-minded collaboration.

123 Ballad's
BCORP
score



CORPORATE PROCUREMENT

Updated procurement forms will allow for greater focus on procurement data tracking and monitoring in the upcoming year. The key activities that were successfully completed included:

- Introduced an updated supplier criteria form incorporating social and environmental performance. All new suppliers will be required to complete this form as part of our supplier intake and assessment. Some of the new question additions include:

- Majority-owned by women, under-represented groups, Indigenous Peoples
- Local ownership
- Social impact code of conduct
- Environmental impact code of conduct
- Description of sustainability practices
- Social and environmental certifications

- As part of our BCorp application we analyzed current suppliers for our BCorp application, finding **37%** are local, and **17%** are owned by women, Indigenous Peoples, or equity-deserving groups.
- Additional initiatives, such as the updated Procurement Policy with a social and environmental lens and Employee Procurement training, were not completed this year. These initiatives will be prioritized and implemented in the next fiscal year.



SUSTAINABLE AND QUALITY WORK ENVIRONMENT

This year we developed a waste reduction framework for our facilities across the province. In the upcoming fiscal year we will roll out this framework to better monitor waste reduction. Currently, all Ballad offices have recycling capabilities.

This year we had significant growth and exciting changes to our facilities in Edmonton and Calgary. A key consideration to many of our facilities was sustainability and efficiency.

FACILITY HIGHLIGHTS

Some highlights from Energy Square (Edmonton):

- All lights are LED
- Low VOC Paint
- Milliken Sustainable Carpets
- All appliances are Energy Star

Some highlights from Stantec (Edmonton):

- Building is LEED Certified
- All lights are LED
- Low VOC Paint
- Shaw Bottle Floor Carpet Tile

Some highlights from Intact (Calgary):

- BOMA BEST GOLD Certification
- Fitwel certification from the Center of Active Design (CfAD)

These new offices were furnished with existing Ballard furniture or by new Steelcase sourced items. Our furniture sustainability report highlights that **37%** (33,824 lbs) of the **1,880** new items were derived from recycled content, and **90%** meet BIFMA's safety and sustainability requirements.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

In 2024, we updated our Indigenous Awareness Training to include the University of Alberta Indigenous Awareness online course as mandatory for all staff. Workforce development staff also received Trauma-informed Care and Motivational Interviewing training, with **77%** completing it, enhancing their ability to work with diverse clients.

We finalized a Salary Range Transparency Plan, where every employee will have access to their role salary range and this will be available for viewing on Bamboo in 2024.

We are currently developing a DEI Policy. We're proud of the progress we've made thus far, but we also recognize that our journey toward true equity is ongoing. As we continue to evolve and strive for excellence, rest assured that our commitment to DEI remains steadfast, driving positive change within our organization and beyond. Some of our DEI metrics include:

67%

Of the management team identify as women.

58%

Of all team members identify as women.

25%

Of staff are under 24 or over 50 years of age.

Celine and Jigyasa at a Career Fair.



We made significant progress on various people and culture projects, including the development of a mentorship program for all staff, set to be implemented in 2024-2025.

We are proud to announce that our community investment doubled this year, reaching \$6,409.

Edmonton team supporting the Oilers.



PEOPLE AND CULTURE

This year, we achieved our two highest eNPS scores, indicating overall employee satisfaction. In January, we scored **58**, and in July, we scored **50**. These remarkable scores reflect our commitment to fostering a positive and fulfilling work environment. Top aspects appreciated by employees included our culture, people, community, communication, autonomy, fulfilling work, and atmosphere.

In addition to our eNPS survey, we also conduct a quarterly Employee Wellbeing Survey. This survey serves as a vital tool for assessing employee happiness within their role, the organization as a whole, and their team dynamics. We received a score of:

4/5 for Happiness

4.2 / 5 for Personal Motivators

4.2 / 5 for Company Motivators

4.1 / 5 for Relationships.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

In 2024, we updated the community investment policy to include sponsorship, donations and employee matched-giving. Our community investment is largely employee-led, with staff identifying opportunities to support local organizations important to them and our clients.

Organizations supported:

With our community investment funds we supported 14 organizations from across the province. These included:

- Scleroderma Canada
- ALS Society of Alberta
- Grande Prairie Friendship Centre
- Beaver First Nation Hockey Tournament
- Native Counseling Services of Alberta
- Whitecourt Fish and Game
- Families Matter
- Red Deer Food Bank
- Northern Lights Regional Humane Society
- No Girl Left Behind
- City of Grande Prairie Women of Influence
- Rising Above
- Whitecourt Community Lunch Box
- Spirit Employment and Training

NOTEWORTHY COMMUNITY INVESTMENT INITIATIVES:

- The Edmonton office organized a volunteer day with the Edmonton Christmas Bureau last holiday season, packing **724** food boxes that fed **410** families.
- The Whitecourt office hosted a food drive, collecting over **2,500** pounds of food for the Whitecourt Food Bank.
- Ballad attended the annual Whitecourt Community Lunch Box fundraiser, and sponsored a table. The Whitecourt team has been working with the Lunchbox program for over **5 years**.
- Ballad sponsored the Rising Above annual fundraiser. Rising Above refers participants to many of our programs, and has been a long standing community partner.
- The Red Deer team donated **\$400** in food to the Red Deer food bank over the holiday season.

Volunteering at the Edmonton Christmas Bureau.



Walking in the ALS Walk Together event.



- The Grand Prairie office sponsored **4** tickets for CORE youth participants to attend the No Girl Left Behind event in Grande Prairie.
- The Calgary team supported Daymien in raising over **\$2,000** for Families Matter during the Calgary Marathon, hosting a water aid station and cheering on runners.
- The High Level office walked to raise awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) on Red Dress Day.
- The Edmonton team participated in the Walk Together for ALS event, and supported Amanda in raising over **\$1000** for the ALS Society of Alberta.

54% of staff utilized their volunteer days to give time to an organization that matters to them.

Daymien at the Calgary Marathon.



NOTEWORTHY PARTICIPANT BUILDING PROJECTS:

Participants from Ballad's Workforce Development Program enrolled in our construction and carpentry programs utilized program time to practice their skills and give back to community, some highlights include:

- The Red Deer WERC program participants built and decorated **36 wood trees** and gifted them to seniors at the Deer Park Village Retirement Home over the holiday season.
- Participants of the Red Deer WERC program in the construction stream created **89 bat boxes** for the City of Lacombe. The City secured a donation for the materials and over the course of a couple of weeks Ballad participants built the boxes which were distributed to schools to paint them, and install them in green spaces throughout the community.
- NW ESTS participants built the Whitecourt Community Lunch Box donation bins that are placed around the town of Whitecourt. The Whitecourt office has been a long time supporter of the Lunch Box program.
- The Grand Prairie WERC participants created planter boxes for Evergreen Park exhibition facility.

Participants setting up a greenhouse they built.



Bat boxes built by program participants.



Community Lunch Boxes built by Participants.



2.

Resilient and Employable Workforce



SCOPE:

Workforce development programs (WFD).

DESIRED CHANGE:

Supporting clients with long-term reattachment to the workforce and increased capacity to be resilient to economic vulnerability.

Across the province we are actively delivering a diversity of industry responsive workforce development programs catering to a diverse clientele ranging from youth to mature workers and spanning from skilled professionals to individuals encountering significant life and employment obstacles.

This year, we experienced success and growth in many programs. We operated 13 programs, including the launch of Professional Insurance Careers in Edmonton. Our offerings included insurance, supply chain, construction, carpentry, hospitality, maintenance, commercial truck driving, employment readiness, and built partnerships to provide current and future programming in agriculture.

**PROGRAM PARTICIPATION
BREAKDOWN:**

We had a **74%** program completion rate and served **1247** clients through our programs, with a breakdown of:

192

In Workforce Employment Readiness and Connections Programs (WERC)

82

In the YEG and YYC Supply Chain Programs

689

In Driving Back to Work

18

In CORE Youth Employment Program

21

In Foundations in Hospitality for Indigenous Youth

56

In YEG and YYC Professional Insurance Programs

168

In NW Essential Skills to Success

21

In WCB Professional Insurance Programs North and South

WFD HIGHLIGHTS:

- This year, **92%** of our programs served equity deserving groups.
- **100%** of our programs served unemployed and underemployed Albertans.
- We had **209** job placements with **156** participants employed at the 90-day follow-up.
- We supported clients with **217** hours of mental health support
- We provided over **180** employment readiness workshops in the WERC, ESTS and CORE programs.

**FOUNDATIONS IN HOSPITALITY
FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH**

We reached a bittersweet milestone with the conclusion of the YESS Foundations in Hospitality for Indigenous Youth program in Edmonton. Over the past four years, **106** Indigenous youth completed the program, with **12** pursuing further education and **82** completing the work experience component. Serving Indigenous youth (15-30) on Treaty 6, 7, and 8 territories, the program helped overcome employment barriers and provided meaningful employment in the hospitality industry. It successfully broke the stigma around hiring Indigenous youth, with employers recognizing the rich and unique culture of the students.

Cohort 13 graduation ceremony.



MAJOR EMPLOYMENT PARTNERS

Our employment partners are vital in providing hands-on and industry-led learning opportunities for our clients through facility tours, in-class employer engagement sessions, and job placements. Below are some highlights from some of our significant employment partnerships:

Brokerlink

- Facilitated 45 placements from Professional Insurance Career (PIC) and WCB in this year and 110 job placements to date.
- Provided 4 in-class employer engagement sessions

Hodge Vegetation

- Facilitated 12 job placements from Whitecourt NW ESTS

Fastenal

- Facilitated 4 job placements for Calgary and Edmonton Supply Chain Programs.
- Organized 4 facility tours.
- Conducted 2 in-class guest speaking sessions.

MTE Logistix Group

- Facilitated 3 job placements this year, totaling 11 to date.
- Conducted 5 facility tours.
- Hosted 1 in-class employer engagement session.

Border Paving

- Facilitated 4 job placements through the Red Deer WERC program.
- Hosted 1 in-class employer engagement session.

River Cree Resort

The River Cree Resort has been an outstanding employer partner for the Foundations in Hospitality for Indigenous Youth Program, accepting 31 graduates for job placements. Justin Sharphead, the Enoch Community Liaison supporting job placements at the resort, praised Ballard and the program graduates. Many students continue to work at the resort today, showcasing the program's long-term impact and success.

Facility tour with supply chain participants.



“The hospitality program was a great experience for students, to give a chance to people who normally don’t get chances like this. To give them a new path in life, and a new career opportunity. The students from the program had a willingness to learn and be uncomfortable and take the chance that’s given to them. It’s not easy stepping out of your comfort zone, or for these youth, their trauma zone, to a more stabilized environment. It can be very intimidating. I think their biggest strength was their willingness to do so, and move forward in life. Working with youth I have learned that there are different walks of life, there is no one program that fits all. That’s what I liked about Ballard’s approach, that you tailored it to the unique needs of the students to make sure they don’t fall through the cracks. It’s easy for a program like this to let kids fall through the cracks through bigger class sizes. But that would have been a disservice. I still walk through the resort and see students from the program, and I am always so happy to see them.”

- Justin Sharphead, Enoch Community Liaison.

Building Resilience

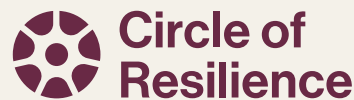
In January 2024 we launched the new holistic evaluation tool - the Circle of Resilience. Ballad's youth and employment readiness programs are designed to not only enhance skills and employability for meaningful employment, but also to support the whole individual so that they can enter the labour market and be more resilient to economic vulnerability.

As such, these programs are designed to support the whole individual in building skills, strengths, and resources that they can leverage and draw on in other parts of their life during major stressors or uncertainty. To evaluate this, Ballad designed Circle of Resilience evaluation tool. The evaluation tool recognizes that clients have various strengths and resources that allow them to be resilient to the effects of economic uncertainty and vulnerability.

The Circle of Resilience was piloted in January 2024. The evaluation takes place at program start, end of formal programming, and at the 90-day follow-up. During the pilot 45 participants completed the first and second evaluation. **80% of participants** increased in two more resilience categories. With the most significant changes in Skills & Employability,

RESILIENCY CATEGORIES:

- 1. Basic Needs:** housing, food, safety, clothing
- 2. Sense of Self:** identity, confidence, motivation
- 3. Physical & Mental Health:** stress management, access to health services
- 4. Money:** household income, savings, borrowing, financial literacy
- 5. Skills & Employability:** skills, knowledge, education
- 6. Connections & Relationships:** networks, family, friends, emergency contacts
- 7. Spirit & Culture:** cultural practices, beliefs, hope, purpose



Both Youth Employment Programs, YESS and CORE, had 100% of participants increase in 3 or more resilience categories, with significant changes seen in Skills & Employability, Sense of Self, Physical & Mental Health, and Spirit & Culture.

PARTICIPANT STORIES

Calgary Supply Chain Program Graduate - Mike Bidenko

Mike was a participant of the Calgary Supply Chain Logistics program. He has since been employed for 6 months at Peak of the Market as an Assistant Operations Manager. “I was new to Calgary and I decided to do a career change. My sister and some family are in supply chain logistics and I was not happy in the healthcare or food industry. I have an analytical mind and thought this would be a great switch. I was applying to jobs with no direct experience. I was getting nowhere. I was struggling to get an interview or even acknowledgement. I was questioning everything or applying to positions that I didn’t even want. It was a pretty dark time. Then I found Ballard. I was validated by the Ballard team that I had great transferable skills. For example, running a kitchen is like running a mini warehouse. I had a huge boost in my confidence. Especially in improving my resume and interview skills. The Ballard team did mock interviews, and gave lots of suggestions. Without them, I would not have gotten this job or done as well. My new role tremendously impacted my family. I secured a nice position with good pay, and it validated what our hopes and ambitions were in coming to Calgary and starting a new career. It really changed my life. I couldn’t have asked for a better outcome.



CORE Youth Employment Connections Program - Participant A attended the Grande Prairie CORE program in 2024.

“The CORE program helped me find a better path. I felt motivated to be happier and I loved being there. The staff helped me to strive to be a better version of myself. Being in the program made me feel more comfortable and confident in who I am, and I learned skills that help me to be able to communicate better. Now I can interact with my family without being



overwhelmed or upset by feeling unaccepted by them because I know that there are lots of people that love and accept me for exactly who I am, including myself. A highlight of the program was the CORE staff. The lighthearted jokes and always laughing together was the best. You guys are seriously some of the best people ever. The most caring and helpful people out of anyone I know in the whole world. Oh, and getting my learner’s license was a highlight for sure too.”

“The big thing with Ballard is it gave me the tools to get a job and keep it! I feel so much better about myself in more ways than you can think.”

Current Ballard Staff, Previous Graduate of the Supply Chain Integrated Training Program - Richard LaPlume

Richard LaPlume participated in the third cohort of the YEG Fundamentals of Supply Chain Management program in 2021. Before joining Ballard as a Supply Chain Facilitator, he faced challenges transitioning from his previous role into the sector. He attributes the comprehensive training provided by Ballard as a primary reason he was able to overcome these employment obstacles.

The skill development and employment opportunities offered by Ballard's programs were pivotal in building Richard's resilience. He noted that the training provided him with practical skills that are directly applicable in the workplace. As a facilitator of a training program in supply chain management, Richard has been able to apply the knowledge and skills he gained from Ballard's programs to his current job, significantly enhancing his professional capabilities.

Completing the Ballard program has greatly improved Richard's prospects for long-term employment, boosting his confidence and competitiveness in the job market. He found the hands-on training and real-world applications particularly impactful. Looking ahead, Richard envisions progressing towards leadership roles in the supply chain industry, a trajectory he attributes to the solid foundation and support provided by Ballard's programs.



NW ESTS Program Graduate - Steve Toutant

Steve was a participant of the NW ESTS program out of Grande Prairie. He has since been employed for over 8 months at X, where he is in delivery services. "I was looking for work and found Ballard. I felt unemployable and not part of society or a part of anything. I was worried about paying for tickets, like the Forklift training, out of pocket. For me, at the time I was unable to get employment. Ballard helped me get the tools and education to get a good job, to be more self-sufficient and to make more money.

Before I didn't have the money to enjoy a lot of things in my life. Now, I don't need to worry about bills. I can do things again. The big thing with Ballard is it gave me the tools to get a job and keep it! I feel so much better about myself in more ways than you can think. My mental and physical health is improved everyday by having an active job. I would recommend Ballard to others, and already have!"

3.

Empowered and Prosperous Communities

SCOPE:

Community, economic and business consulting services.

DESIRED CHANGE:

Thriving and prosperous businesses and communities that are empowered to pursue their long-term vision.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Many of our consulting projects include an engagement strategy that ensures that those impacted by the consulting project are included in the process or decision making. We want to ensure that a diversity of voices are reflected in the work that we do. The consulting team integrates appropriate engagement methodology into each project to collect the communities ideas, opinions, concerns and vision for the future. Some of the impressive engagement highlights include:

- Engaged over **46** communities through our consulting services, **12** of which were Indigenous Communities
- Reached over **3,952** people through our engagement activities



Project Highlight: Canmore Labour Market Recruitment and Retention Strategy Project

Ballad, on behalf of the Town of Canmore's Economic Development Department and its project partners, conducted research and analysis on local labour market issues, including: an environmental scan of the current labour market, identification of skills gaps and potential training needs, and the analysis of current and anticipated employment opportunities. Ballad's team carried out primary research with Canmore's businesses and labour force in 2023. The project promotion and engagement led to:

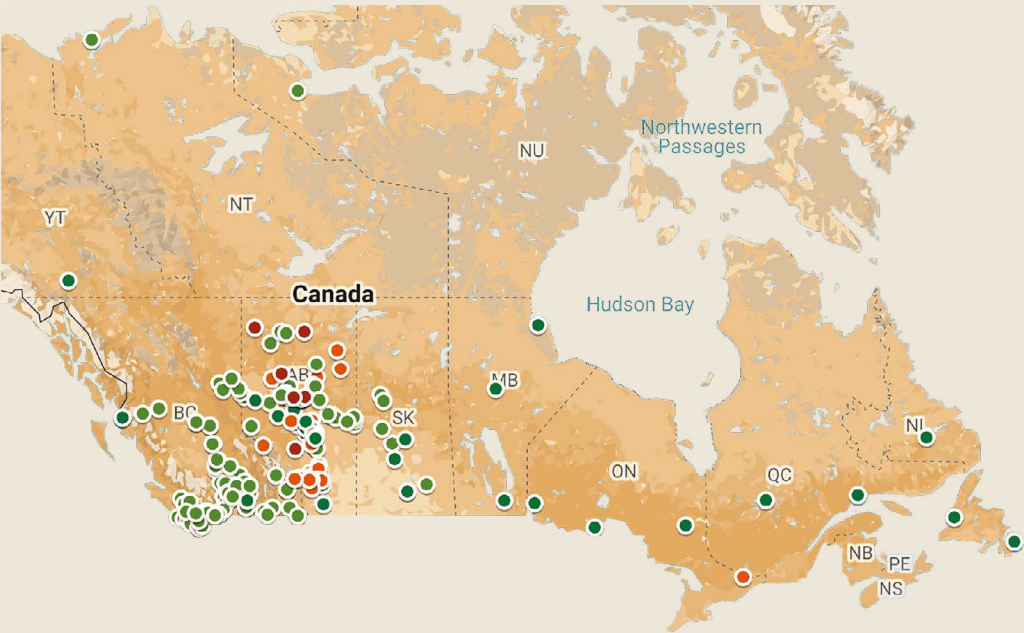
- 168 completed surveys with business owners across a wide range of sectors;
- 399 completed surveys with labour market participants in Canmore;
- 25 completed in-depth interviews with cross-industry business owners identified by the Project Steering Committee (PSC);
- 8 completed in-depth interviews with representatives of the Town and other organizations representing key project stakeholder groups.
- The final strategy contained 65 detailed recommendations with implementation guidelines, across eight thematic areas, gaining unanimous approval by the Town Council in March 2024.



A facilitated discussion with Canmore stakeholders



COMMUNITIES WE'VE WORKED WITH



Legend

- New Communities This Year
- New Indigenous Communities This Year
- Communities All Time
- Indigenous Communities All time

4.

Scaling Impact and Transforming the Ecosystem

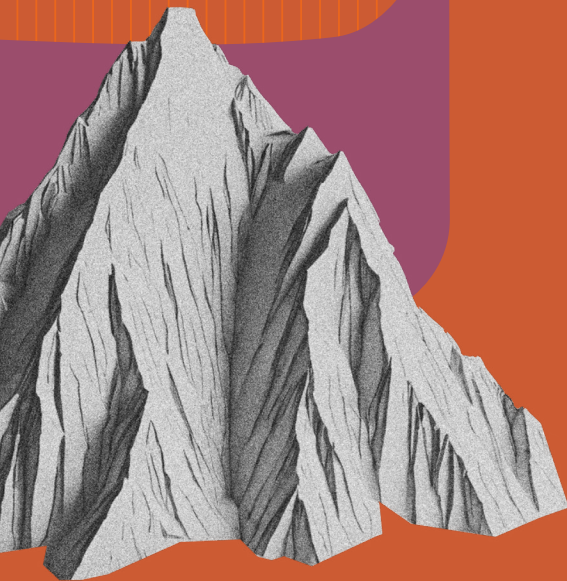
SCOPE:

*Leadership team and senior
team members.*

DESIRED CHANGE:

*Concerted knowledge mobilization
and relationship building for
industry advancement.*

To support our growth and impact targets we built strategic partnerships to deliver industry-responsive programming and continue to contribute to the workforce development industry. The inclusion of forward-thinking and industry best practices into our programs allows us to create the most value for participants and be adaptive to the changing labor market needs. These partnerships include:





BOW VALLEY COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP

In 2024 Ballard entered into a research pilot partner collaboration agreement with Bow Valley College (BVC) as part of the Skills for Success: Validation Study funded by the Government of Canada's Skills for Success Program. This research project supports the Government of Canada's Office of Skills for Success with the national transition to and adoption of the recently launched Skills for Success model through validated applied research. Skills for Success, previously referred to as Essential Skills, focuses on foundational skills needed by Canadians to participate, adapt and thrive in the workplace. As a participating research partner, Ballard has integrated the pre-program skills evaluation, skills for success online training, and post-program skills evaluation into two of our current integrated-training programs in Edmonton and Calgary. As a participant of this research we are providing Bow Valley College with data and insight that will inform the validity of the model before its national roll-out.

OLDS COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP

We made significant strides in solidifying two new partnerships with Olds College of Agriculture and Technology to deliver agricultural programming in Red Deer and Calgary starting September 2024. This partnership will allow us to provide industry-responsive and hands-on learning through our WERC Red Deer program and a new AgriEdge Careers Integrated Training program in Calgary.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

We continue to advocate for youth employment, mental health and other services for youth through the meaningful work of the CORE team. Amy has been an active member of the Community of Practice (CoP) with Children's Services and Youth Employment Connections Program Service Providers. Through this CoP, Amy represented Ballard and other YECP providers at the Shared Community of Practice YECP and TAP Employment Pathway Panel Discussion. The CORE team has attended Youth Serving Agencies roundtable discussions with the City of Grande Prairie and other youth advocacy initiatives.

OUTREACH EVENTS

Across the province our team as attended, sponsored and spoke at various events, some to note:

- Innovate Alberta – Growing Ag Tech *(Delegate)*
- Black History Month trade show *(Booth)*
- YYC Job Fair Celebrating Diversity *(Booth)*

- Economic Developers of Alberta Conference *(Sponsor and Speaker)*
- Social Impact Measurement Conference hosted by the University of Calgary *(Delegate)*
- Whitecourt Chamber of Commerce Mixer *(Host)*
- CITT Alberta Area Council Golf Day *(Participant)*
- IBAA Conference and Golf Tournament *(Sponsor)*
- Growing the North Grande Prairie *(Delegate)*
- ASCM Conference Vancouver *(Delegate)*
- Whitecourt & District Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament *(Sponsor)*

LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

This year we joined the Chamber of Commerce in every office location to support the local business community and build employer relationships. In addition, we joined the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCedNet).



**Canadian
CED Network**
**Réseau canadien
de DÉC**



Thank you!

Together, we created a significant positive impact in the communities we operate and serve.

The progress we made this year would not be possible without the hard-work and dedication of the Ballard team across the province. We rely on each and every one of you to champion the Ballard mission to empower resilient people, communities, and businesses through our corporate operations, workforce development programs and consulting services.

Our work is further amplified by our employer partners, community partners, strategic relationships, and our generous long-standing clients. Thank you for your support, knowledge, and financial contributions that make our efforts possible.

We look forward to continuing this work in the year ahead, and building on the significant impact foundation that was achieved in 2023-2024.

SNEAK PEAK OF THE YEAR AHEAD

Here are a few things we are excited about:

- **Career Development Pathways:** Implementing a comprehensive program to enhance the skills and potential of our staff.
- **Environmental Performance:** Making significant strides in managing and monitoring our environmental impact.
- **Sustainable Jobs Industry Partnerships:** Creating new partnerships to deliver innovative programming for our clients in the sustainable jobs sector.
- **Impact Database and Analysis:** Enhancing our impact database, management, and analysis capabilities to better understand our WFD social return on investment.
- **Compelling Impact Storytelling:** Collaborating with the new Impact Analyst and Marketing Specialist to lead compelling impact storytelling initiatives.
- **Training:** Providing Mental Health First Aid Training to WFD teams.

Learn more about our impact initiatives and ways to work together, by contacting:
impact@balladgroup.ca | www.balladgroup.ca/impact

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2023-2024

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