



**Basic Income Canada Network**  
**Réseau canadien pour le revenu garanti**

# **Annual Report 2022-23**

April 2023

The Basic Income Canada Network is a registered non-partisan, non-profit organization working for a stronger, healthier Canada where a basic income ensures everyone is able to meet their basic needs, participate in society, and live with dignity regardless of their work or other status. See more at [basicincomecanada.org](https://basicincomecanada.org) in English and French.

We are dedicated to being a credible source of information and analysis, a connector of ideas and people in Canada and beyond, and a catalyst for action with partners and allies. We are involved in public awareness, knowledge transfer, policy development and network building.

## Overview

*The basic income movement continues to face challenges as the need for a basic income grows. Systemic problems that the pandemic exposed have not been remedied. Climate change, inflation, war and high levels of poverty and inequality are among major issues driving hardship, stress and uncertainty.*

*BICN's hope for the future persists, alongside its many allies. The work is more important than ever. Canada has the capacity to show that societies, economies and governments function better when basic needs are met and people can be part of solutions to other problems.*

*BICN's highlights of 2022-23 include:*

- *A partnership project initiated in the Northwest Territories.*
- *A Consensus Statement on basic income design parameters developed collaboratively with other basic income organizations and allies*
- *Working with US partners on the BIG conference there, organizing virtual sessions focused on Canada*
- *Submissions to federal budget consultations, and a submission to House and Senate committees studying the proposed new disability benefit (C-22).*
- *Contribution to successes from the Basic Income Now campaign during the Ontario election*
- *Release of the Green Resilience Report*
- *Planning for a major pan-Canadian conference in 2024*

*At BICN and within the movement, we've learned to spell each other off at times, and to keep embracing new people, ideas and skills while respecting the accomplishments of those who have been on this journey longer.*

*BICN's financial position is holding but needs to grow along with the demands on us for sustainability. Our charitable status application is in progress with the Canada Revenue Agency.*

*This year's **AGM is being held via Zoom on Thursday, May 25, 2023 at 7 pm ET.** Board elections will be held electronically prior to the AGM.*

# Report

## April 2022 to March 2023

### Context

- We believe we made the most of another challenging year, delivering on plans, and taking on a major new unplanned project.
- Since the onset of the pandemic, it has been difficult for smaller non-profits to sustain their work, especially in the policy sphere. The need grew for direct help for food, shelter, physical and mental health, and other services to meet emergency needs.
- The more hopeful longer-term upside is that many more civil society organizations involved in front line work were advocating for a basic income guarantee because they know they cannot meet the demand and that the people who come to them deserve better from their governments. Also encouraging was growth in municipal support and provincial interest in basic income and inquiries into various issues the included basic income as a solution.

### Achievement Highlights

The following are examples of contributions to the basic income arena in the past year. Increasingly, in leadership and supporting roles, BICN encouraged effective collaborations.

#### Green Resilience

On April 15, 2022 of final report of last year's [Green Resilience Project](#) was released, linking climate transition, income security and community resilience issues and solutions. While this project was funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada, it was Minister Karina Gould, responsible for major income security programs, who opened the launch in April. We hope for more collaboration across government departments that too often operate in silos.

#### Northwest Territories Basic Income Guarantee Project

In the fall of 2022, Alternatives North, a social justice organization in the Northwest Territories, approached BICN to coordinate a project to develop the foundations for designing and delivering a basic income guarantee in the NWT, where life can be very different than in other parts of the country.

Working with guidance from Alternatives North, and in partnership with Indigenous experts from the NWT and Green Resilience partners, the team undertook extensive background work and held a forum to listen and learn from community members. This project was funded by the Government of the NWT, the Public Service Alliance of Canada Social Justice Fund, the United Church of Canada, and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith. It s a great example of the effectiveness of collaborations bringing together an incredible knowledge and

skills base. No other organization felt they could take on a project like this and no one on our team could have done this on their own.

This project adds greatly to understanding how important it is that a basic income guarantee is designed with and for the people who need it. The realities of the North are unique and too often ignored in policy development. The **Foundations for Action: Basic Income Guarantee for the NWT Report** <https://basicincomecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/NWTBIGProject-Report-March-2023.pdf> offers six recommendations for government and civil society action going forward and it is accompanied by a Summary for Policy Makers and a Community Summary.

### Consensus Statement on a Basic Income Guarantee

This statement <https://basicincomecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Consensus-Statement-Final.pdf> is a product of the National Forum, a gathering of national, regional and local basic income groups as well as individual experts and other civil society allies. The Consensus Statement sets out the parameters for a basic income guarantee that would work in Canada and its wide endorsement fosters a strong, unified voice for basic income. BICN's experience in policy development and modelling and our solid reputation for credibility, trusted partnership and ability to communicate complex ideas and stories in plain language are resources that we offered partners and allies to develop and promote the Consensus.

### BICN Political Engagement

A range of activity included:

- Written submissions to federal budget consultations, both the **Finance Committee** and later the Finance department, in line with Option 1 in BICN's Policy Options publication <https://basicincomecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/BICN-2023-pre-budget-paper.pdf>. We continued to support the need for a national framework, as put forward in Bill C-223 and the same bill in the Senate as S-233. BICN also submitted briefs to House and Senate committees studying the proposed new **Canada Disability Benefit** (C-22) <https://basicincomecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/CDB-Brief-w-logo.pdf>.
- Ongoing participation in federal All-Party Anti-Poverty Caucus meetings, and meetings of the Atlantic basic income group supported by Tamarack.
- A meeting at the invitation of the **Newfoundland and Labrador** government with the Minister responsible and members of their all party committee on basic income as well as meetings with senior civil servants working on income security, including the new NL basic income program for youth leaving care. Also by invitation, BICN participated in meetings of NL civil society organizations on matters related to food security and income.
- Participation in the collaborative process of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternative's **Alternative Federal Budget**, which recommended moving the Canada Worker Benefit to a basic income model and improvements to the Canada Child Benefit and Old Age Security.
- Working with the lead organization, Ontario Basic Income Network, UBIWorks and other partners to apply the **Basic Income Now** campaign mode designed for the 2021 federal election to the **Ontario** election in June, 2022. The campaign helped draw attention to basic income as an election issue. A pledge to work for a basic income generated healthy competition among candidates, and several who pledged got elected, including long time champion and BICN advisor, Chandra Pasma.

## Conferences and Connections

Much has happened on this front as well:

- The newly named BIG Conference, was held in a hybrid format in Portland, Oregon on June 23 and 24, and virtually on June 25, 2022. As with the NABIGs that this conference grew out of BICN worked with US colleagues to organize. Our focus, however, was working with Canadians to hold several virtual sessions on The Political Ecology of Basic Income in Canada. We had panels with politicians, journalists, activists, academics, pilot participants, and more. Several Canadians also presented in other sessions, with in person and virtually.
- That experience encouraged organizations that participate in national forum meetings in Canada to agree to work for a first, full, pan-Canadian conference in 2024 in the nation's capital. (The US is going solo in 2023). By the end of March 2023, a planning committee had met several times to generate ideas, a smaller grant writing team had started work headed by Tracy Smith-Carrier at Royal Roads University in BC, a location and academic partner had been lined up with the University of Ottawa, with Carleton University support as well, and dates set. *See more under plans for the coming year.*
- BICN's work to develop a data base of stakeholders aligned or potentially aligned with basic income goals laid the groundwork for further outreach and collaboration on shared goals.
- BICN also contributed to student learning and involvement in basic income. A group of students from the University of Victoria did placement research with us related to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit. A short video presentation was developed by BICN for a labour studies class at McMaster. A graduate student at the University of Manitoba with extensive work experience helping people deal with stress and trauma, did a policy placement with us researching links between mental health and the design dimensions of different income programs that can help or hurt.

## Communications

We continued to bring you news and access to resources through newsletters and our website, with a few changes as we evolve. You'll see more infographics in newsletters and the News more front and centre on the website. As a reflection of the increasing work BICN is doing with and for others, you'll see a new section under BICN resources called Collaborations featuring related reports and documents. We anticipate this will only grow. We also continued to get news coverage, write opinion pieces and letters to the editor, and get our message out through participation in webinars and virtual meetings.

## Fundraising

For the first time, BICN hired a firm to help us with a one-time capital fundraising campaign that ran for four weeks in the fall. It did not bring in the resources we hoped but we did come out a little bit ahead. There are many reasons for that, including inflation and the fact that many small non-profits and those engaged in policy work are struggling in the face of rapidly growing emergency need for direct goods and services, such as food, shelters and mental health treatments. Lessons from the experience, however, will help us in our own future fundraising efforts. A survey that was conducted mid campaign to get to know our supporters better also provided valuable information. Many supporters are great activists but do not have the resources to contribute money. The majority think we are doing a very good job and it is important to them that we continue. Some provided great ideas for future work and we will take those up as our resources allow.

## Governance and Election of Directors

The BICN Board has 13 director positions. There are six two-year term positions open for election in 2023. BICN's members who are eligible to vote include directors, independent advisors and representatives of regional basic income groups. Nominations for directors are accepted in late April/early May. Voting takes place electronically just prior to the AGM in May.

In 2023, Brian Einarson (BC), Sid Frankel (MB), Shari Laliberté (AL), John Rook (AB), and Pierre Stevens (NS) are seeking re-election. Continuing members are Enrique Garcia (ON), Amal Khan (SK), Andrew McCann (ON), John Mills (ON), Hannah Pazderka (AB), and Sheila Regehr (ON). Our current executive team includes Sheila, Pierre, John Mills, Enrique and Sid.

Sameer Nurmohamed is not seeking re-election this year so he can dedicate more time to his young, growing family. We will miss his tax expertise and other talents. Dwight Jenkins, elected last year, has also had to relinquish his position due to time constraints. We are grateful that Karen Thompson (ON) who was also on the ballot last year will fill the second half of the term.

Please check the website after the AGM for Karen's bio and election results.

As we work towards charitable status we continue to enhance our governance policies. There are different models of governance in non-profits and BICN is a hybrid. In big organizations, the board has a leadership and vision role but the daily operations are managed by a CEO and work is done by staff. Small, informal, volunteer groups often have loose governance and focus on undertaking tasks. As a registered non-profit there are standards BICN has to meet. The BICN Board, therefore, is a visionary leadership, management and operations board. We have wonderful part-time personnel but no regular employees. That means we need directors with different skill sets, significant accountability, and flexibility and time to participate in the work. We are so fortunate to have a track record of great directors.

Over the past year we have formed committees to advance our work on: strategic planning; political engagement; stakeholders and partnerships; fundraising; and communications. We are increasingly bringing in people from the wider network and our allies to join committees, provide advice and help as they are able with projects that serve mutual goals. We are very grateful for their participation.

We want to express our deep appreciation to all our emeritus directors over the years. Many are still very active in their own way and continue to respond to calls for support and guidance when we need it. One of BICN's founding members, Rob Rainer, is now championing basic income efforts with his fellow mayors and counsellors in Ontario and across the country. And we always welcome those who bring new talents and strengths to our basic income community.

## Financial Report

BICN's financial picture is fairly stable although we lost funding during the pandemic and now inflation is hurting us as well as many non-profits so we had to draw down funds for a third year. We have continued to be highly effective, however, during a period when interest in basic income is high and the need for it is growing. We have already started working with partners to apply for funding for the 2024 Pan-Canadian BIG Forum being organized for May next year. Our application for charitable status is still in progress. That status would allow us to provide tax receipts and gain access to other funders.

BICN remains the only registered non-profit organization dedicated to basic income and we have been fortunate to be part of collaborative projects with other organizations and funders. For the most part money flows through BICN and our major contribution is through in-kind time, organizational capacity, networking and substantive expertise. They are important and valuable projects that advance basic income goals but they do not bring us revenue other than minimal amounts reflecting administrative overhead.

<b>BICN Balance Statement (March 31, 2023)</b>	
<b>Assets</b> (Pay Pal, Cash in Bank)	\$27,513.21
Accounts receivable	0
<b>Total Assets</b> (31/03/2023)	<b>\$27,513.21</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	
Accounts payable	0
<b>Equity</b>	
Accrued income - previous years	\$35,440.21
- (deficit 2022-23)	(\$7,927.00)
Total Equity	\$27,513.21
<b>Total Liability and Equity</b>	<b>\$27,513.21</b>

Note 1. We identify what our actual balance is on March 31, 2023. There are invoices submitted by March 31 for the Northwest Territories project (total value of about \$35K) reimbursed after that date and some payments made by us after that date. We will report these actuals next year.

Note 2. Green Resilience funds reflect payment received after the project end of March 31, 2022.

Note 3. Funds related to Kingston were raised by and for the Kingston group beginning in the previous fiscal year; BICN acted as financial agent until they could get their own banking arrangements made.

<b>BICN Revenue and Expenses (April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023)</b>	
<b>Revenue</b>	
BICN Board	\$3,672.00
Members	\$3,160.00
Support (public donations)	\$28,101.12
Green Resilience Project (admin overhead)	\$1,786.86
Northwest Territories BIG project	\$14,145.75
BINow Campaign	\$333.73
<b>Total Revenue (\$44,474.03 in 2021/22)</b>	<b>\$51,199.46</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Operating (insurance, legal, bank fees)	\$2,980.78
Phone/Communications	\$1,396.35
NationBuilder	\$5,966.83
Website Maintenance/Admin	\$2,069.31
<b>Personnel</b>	
General Manager	\$12,000.00
Website News	\$9,000.00
Newsletter	\$4,000.00
<b>Projects</b>	
Northwest Territories BIG (personnel and materials)	\$16,547.00
Basic Income Kingston	\$3,846.92
Basic Income Now campaign support to OBIN	\$915.30
BI-NS conference support	\$300.00
NABIG High School Essay Prize for a Canadian (\$100 US)	\$134.46
Miscellaneous	(\$30.49)
<b>Total Expenses (\$48,063.26 in 2021/22)</b>	<b>\$59,126.46</b>
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>(\$7,927.00)</b>

# Plans and Priorities 2023/24

## Context

- A federal election is coming; it may be called early. Canada has by no means left Covid-19 and its impacts behind, while other factors combine to worsen inequality and hardship as governments fall back into the path dependency of old, siloed ways of working. Using the GST credit as a vehicle to support people with low income, as the federal government announced in the 2023 budget in late March, shows a glimmer of hope toward a better path. It's billed as a grocery rebate but really, it's simply cash—for food or for rent or medication or anything else. But it's too small and it's only temporary. The proposed disability benefit is moving slowly. There is still no government 'home' or 'framework' for addressing widespread income insecurity and its many manifestations.
- We are urged to action by signs of weakening societal trust and cooperation that come with inequality and hardship. Many people who could benefit from a basic income are feeling abandoned by governments. BICN has a role in helping raise awareness that a basic income is a positive government solution that provides the freedom and respect they desire.
- We are encouraged by many civil society organizations, however, with shared goals and struggles to find complementary solutions to food insecurity, mental health crises, climate transition and related challenges. We are encouraged by the evidence that continues to show that a basic income guarantee works.

## Priorities and Expected Achievements for 2023/24

Some plans are firm while others may be more fluid, depending on political and other circumstances.

### 2024 Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) Forum in Ottawa

Just a little later this spring, there will be public announcements about the BIG Forum being held in Ottawa from May 23-36, 2024. There will be a virtual component but we really want to encourage face-to-face connections across ideas, sectors, common goals. As a teaser of what's to come:

- A key grant application, on which BICN is a collaborator, is being submitted. There are several letters of support for the application including from three universities and several other allied organizations, some committing to funding and in-kind support. BICN has worked with the grant team to line up initial supporters and funders.
- You'll soon hear about the amazing line up of featured speakers who have enthusiastically committed to come.
- BICN will provide about \$6000 along with in-kind contributions of time and expertise of over \$20,000. We will continue to be on the core team for this initiative and part of the large and diverse planning committee.

There are so many exciting possibilities that can develop over the coming year in further designing the program, the actions that can form the lead up to the main event and the ways in which it can be a catalyst for greater solidarity and influence on government policy. Our various

partners have ideas and there will be a Call for Participation in a few months where proposals can be submitted by anyone interested

### **Election Preparedness**

The period building up to the BIG Forum is also a period where BICN's political engagement, stakeholder development, fundraising and communications and promotion activities can support preparedness for elections, including if a federal election is called or held before May, 2024. We would work with partners in the Basic Income Now campaign mode to build on earlier lessons and successes. Some of those partners are transitioning and BICN will work to determine how we can best support ongoing political engagement.

### **Basic Income Movement and Ally Building**

As our resources permit, we want to support a range of ideas that can bring diverse people together and engage the wider public, such as through community conversations, webinars, local town halls and other creative initiatives.

- We hope our charitable status application, fundraising, approaches to other institutional funders and stakeholder efforts will expand the possibilities.
- We plan to develop last year's excellent graduate student research on mental health into a BICN Policy paper to help the public, service providers, government income security decision-makers and people suffering from mental health problems and addictions to better understand how basic income design supports mental wellness.
- There is potential for a second phase of the Northwest Territories project that we would be privileged to work on as a key collaborator. There are also potential opportunities to apply the Green Resilience community-based model to other projects that connect environmental and income security issues and solutions.

## **Thank you and acknowledgments**

The Board of BICN, acknowledges that much of what many people enjoy today is built on exploited land and labour, that inequalities and injustices persist, and that, in our work, we share the goals and commitment to action of many other civil society organizations for a happier, healthier and more sustainable future.

As always, we extend our sincere appreciation to volunteers, supporters, donors, sponsors, and contractors across the country and beyond, for their valuable contributions. We acknowledge and welcome the increasing engagement of people in policy and political spheres—elected and appointed officials, public servants, and party members and supporters. We are thrilled to have tenacious political champions at all levels of government. We also extend profound thanks to researchers, writers, journalists, and activists, from students to grandparents, and others in Canada and around the world. Some of us have been in this movement for decades and others bring new energy and diverse insights to keep us moving forward. Our governments in Canada have the capacity to empower everyone.