



Basic Income Canada Network
Réseau canadien pour le revenu garanti

Annual Report 2024/25

April 11, 2025

The Basic Income Canada Network is a nationally registered, non-partisan, non-profit organization working for an unconditional basic income for Canada that supports everyone in exercising their human rights by enabling them to meet basic needs, live with dignity, participate in society and the economy, and share in our country's abundance.

See more at basicincomecanada.org in English and French.

We are dedicated to being a credible source for public policy analysis and development, a connector of ideas and people in Canada and beyond, and a catalyst for positive change with partners and allies. We are involved in advancing policy solutions with government and civil society leaders, as well as fostering public education and network building.

Overview

BICN achieved significant success this past year to keep forging a path for a basic income guarantee in Canada. The need for better income security, however, keeps growing and remains largely unaddressed by the federal government. Since the beginning of 2025, the new administration in the United States has brought tariffs, threats to Canada's sovereignty, and fractured international relationships. In this chaotic and uncertain environment, there are many challenges as well as opportunities that BICN will pursue for a fairer, stronger Canada.

BICN's 2024/25 highlights include:

- *The inaugural pan-Canadian **Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) Forum** held in May, 2024.*
- *Policy analysis leading to recommendations to the federal government and support for bills S-233 and C-223 calling for a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income.*
- *Public education via newsletters, podcasts, webinars, media and events.*
- *Working with other organizations whose mandates are grounded in human rights.*
- *Knowledge sharing with international counterparts at the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) Congress in Bath, United Kingdom.*

At BICN, we've embraced new people, ideas and skills among a growing range of allies, while respecting the accomplishments and resilience of those who have been on this journey longer. The diversity of our Board and our valued relationships with allies are key strengths. Like many other non-profits, BICN faces increasing resource constraints and continues to work for greater financial sustainability.

***BICN's Annual General Meeting is being held via Zoom on Friday May 16, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. ET.** Philip Alston, former UN Special Rapporteur on Poverty, who has written about basic income and human rights, has agreed to be our special guest speaker. An Australian scholar, he teaches international law, human rights law, economic and social rights, and strategic human rights litigation at New York University's School of Law.*

Report

April 2024 to March 2025

Context

- For the period of this report, the federal political environment has been hyper partisan and that has limited the scope for policy dialogue among interested MPs and Senators about basic income. The Canada Disability Benefit was implemented but falls far short of even a partial basic income and eligibility is tightly restricted. Among provincial governments, NL and PEI have all-party support for basic income. QC, BC and NL have partial basic income programs for some population groups that they are rolling out. Support from municipal councils grew.
- There were important developments and innovations, such as new modelling options developed in PEI and produced for Canada nationally by the Parliamentary Budget Office to compare results in impact and cost using different family definitions. In several provinces and territories, research, analysis and public education were undertaken in academic, government and civil society spheres.
- In general, the non-profit sector faced high demand and lower volunteer time and financial support, especially those providing direct services. However, more organizations involved in front line work advocated for a basic income guarantee as a more permanent solution to the limitations in income insecurity that underly many other problems, from anxiety and mental distress to food and housing unaffordability.

Achievement Highlights

The following examples are illustrative of the BICN's work. While a significant share of our work was done in partnership with others, we were in leadership and accountability roles in all those joint undertakings.

2024 Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) Forum

- The Forum held in Ottawa (and virtually) May 23-26 was a priority for BICN up to and following the event. We met and exceeded our expectations in many ways and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The Forum Report <https://forum2024.ca/> provides more description. Four overarching themes that emerged consistently at the Forum inform BICN's work going forward:
 - *There is energy and hope in positive, feasible solutions*
 - *The evidence for a basic income guarantee is abundant*
 - *Canada has a unique set of building blocks*
 - *Synergies are a better value than silos.*
- BICN worked in partnership with Dr. Tracy Smith-Carrier at Royal Roads University, who was responsible for funding from a SSHRC grant, and Dr. Wendy Gifford at the University of Ottawa where the event was held, and with the benefit of a broadly representative planning committee that provided advice and tangible support. We are grateful to the many people who contributed in many ways.

- BICN's leadership responsibilities and accountabilities for this project included:
 - Co-ordination/oversight of all parts of the organizing, planning, budgeting and operational cohesion, convening meetings and on-site event management.
 - Website creation, content and maintenance, plenary speaker and sponsor engagement, program development and runs of show, selection and liaison with session presenters, contracting (e.g., for technical services, accommodation, interpretation, translation), registration system, on-site coordination.
 - Post forum report, budget reconciliation, website transitions.
- The BICN team were also plenary speakers and session presenters on our own research and analysis (e.g., Policy Options, Multi-streams framework for policy change, income and food security, income and mental health), volunteer coordinators, operators of the marketplace of books and merchandise, and spokespersons with media.

Policy and Leadership Engagement

To advance policy development on a basic income guarantee, we've analyzed problems and potential policy solutions, and on this basis provided recommendations to government and worked with both government and civil society leaders. Our work and actions served to advance the exercise in Canada of human rights articulated in international treaties and covenants that Canada has ratified.

- As early advisors on, and endorsers of, twin bills C-223 and S-233 calling for a national framework for a guaranteed livable income, we worked to gather support, including by writing to Quebec Senators to provide evidence to constructively address matters they had raised in committee.
- In advance of the BIG Forum, BICN, with the support of Senator Kim Pate and MP Bonita Zarrillo, hosted a meeting on Parliament Hill that brought together interested parliamentarians and national basic income leaders.
- We made recommendations to the Finance Committee in a written submission and as witnesses in person in Ottawa. While steadfastly calling for a national framework, we also recommended pragmatic steps that the federal government could take immediately on a path to a basic income in light of the urgent need for federal income support. We also continued to support improvements to the Canada Disability Benefit.
- BICN's Sid Frankel and Sheila Regehr continued to be part of the collaborative process of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternative's *Alternative Federal Budget* (AFB). AFB 2025 <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/news-research/alternative-federal-budget-2025/> proposes four unconditional income security pillars, including the Canada Livable Income (CLI) for working age adults in deep poverty that represents a step towards a basic income.
- We participated in meetings of the federal All-Party Anti-Poverty Caucus and met with senior officials in ESDC to discuss our policy views and share experience from meetings with international researchers that have implications for Canada.
- As political changes unfolded BICN wrote to Liberal leadership candidates, congratulated the candidate promising a path to a basic income and encouraged the front runner to step up to her bar. Individual board members also engaged with politicians across the political spectrum as we anticipated an election.

- At the municipal level, BICN sees Toronto and its mayor being important leaders in advocating for healthier cities. We therefore joined with United Church of Canada and other advocates who want Toronto to adopt a resolution on a basic income guarantee.
- BICN's Sheila Regehr was presented with a leadership award by the Canadian Poverty Institute. And in order to keep strengthening BICN's leadership capacity several members of our team took specific leadership training using the Harvard Kennedy School's Ganz framework. This was provided by the Institute for Change Leaders through funding from the Toronto Community Foundation.

Public Education

BICN provided a reliable source of knowledge and analysis on basic income matters to wide and diverse audiences throughout the year. Our capacity to reach audiences is grounded in listening and learning from the perspectives of others and staying abreast of developments.

- We produced monthly newsletters that shared thought pieces, research, reports, webinar recordings, the latest in the media, and ways for people to connect to events and actions.
- We maintained our website as a principal source for anyone looking to understand basic income, at an entry level and in more depth, while always working to be widely accessible, using plain language and featuring explanatory videos. We also used our website to promote and direct people to the BIG Forum and to make the Big Forum Report available. As basic income is featured in the news, it is added to the website every few days.
- BICN's Chair was featured on radio shows, webinars and podcasts such as The Radical Reverend on ciut.fm, Small Change with Doreen Nichol, Off the Edge with Dave Trafford, the Institute for Change Leaders' Voices of Change, the Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement (to promote the BIGForum and its results), and Blue Door. She presented at the 18th Machik Weekend held in Canada for the first time and wrote an article for the Canadian Poverty Institute's Spero publication on the Right to Adequate Income. She is called on by media to verify information and got a major news outlet to change a headline about the 2025 Parliamentary Budget Office Report that was inaccurate and misleading.
- Other members of the Board and team were involved in public education efforts in many ways in their own locations or areas of expertise, such as through teaching, researching, speaking, engaging with media, local event organizing, and working within other organizations and affiliations they share. The Chair who has a background in gender equality and the women's movement in Canada was interviewed by Margaret Little of Queen's University for an article about the history of feminism and basic income in Canada.
- In our previous report we featured an article by directors from Alberta, Hannah Pazderka and John Rook that has renewed relevance in our political situation. "The Conservative Defense of Basic Income" <https://www.ubi4all.org/post/guest-article-the-conservative-defence-of-basic-income> illustrates basic income's alignment with values concerning family, caregiving, community resilience, civic participation, less bureaucracy, and economic opportunity.
- Beyond Canada, BICN's Chair and General Manager were interviewed about developments in Canada by openDemocracy, part of the UK non-profit openDemocracy Foundation for the Advancement of Global Education. The article is at <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/basic-income-wont-stop-people-working-lessons-from-canada-ubi/> and BICN circulated it widely in Canada.

Allies and Partnerships

The success of partnerships in organizing the BIG Forum and the range of sponsors and remarkable diversity of excellent speakers who were at the BIG Forum are a testament to the respected relationships with many allies that BICN has built over its history. We are trusted and that is something we work hard to earn. Here are more examples from the past year.

- BICN continued to be the organizational anchor for National Forum meetings of basic income advocates and allies, including organizations and individuals such as academics, held in October and March. We are also a key part of the Forum's strategic planning committee as joint actions usually require BICN expertise and other resources.
- BICN also contributed to meetings of the Atlantic basic income group supported by the Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement.
- BICN joined Imagine Canada to stay abreast of the larger non-profit world, access data, research and policy discussions as members, contribute our experience and learn from the experience of others.
- BICN participated in a **We Go Together** forum in Ottawa in October. Led by Citizens for Public Justice, this project brought together organizations in diverse sectors (e.g., food, health, housing, labour, income security) with common goals, taking a human rights and justice-based approach to public policy rather than a charitable approach of giver and receiver or one that divides people into deserving and undeserving categories. This approach is fully aligned with BICN's.
- BICN continued in a collaborative role with new communities joining in the [Green Resilience Project](#) led by our allies at Energy Mix Productions .
- BICN team members engaged in cooperation and ally building in their own regions and communities of interest. For example, Damon Johnson in MB is a leader in urban Indigenous coalitions, Karen Thompson in ON is also active in Grand(m)others Act to Save the Planet (GASP4Change), Sid Frankel is a member of Campaign 2000, Josephine Grey in ON is a prominent community organizer, human rights activist and speaker who wears several hats and Ben Earl is CEO of a food bank and involved with several food security organizations at local, provincial and national level.

Beyond Canada

- Our work in Canada benefits from knowledge and experience around the world. Three members of BICN's Executive team made presentations and engaged with other international leaders at the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) Congress held in Bath in August <https://www.bien2024.net/>. Canada is highly regarded for its pragmatic approach to feasible policy development. As Canadians, we benefited especially from discussions among top international researchers involved in many programs, pilots and experiments about ethics, results and lessons learned.
- BICN's Chair Sheila Regehr is a member of the FRIBIS (Freiburg Institute for Basic Income Studies) gender equality network.

- BICN became a signatory to two United Nations-related BIEN initiatives, one on the role of basic income in peacekeeping and post conflict reconstruction. The more recent one is being submitted to the Office of the United Nations Special Rapporteur (SR) on Extreme Poverty for the report "Roadmap for Eradicating Poverty Beyond Growth".

Governance and Election of Directors

The BICN Board is mandated to have 3 to 13 director positions with two-year terms. The executive team includes Sheila Regehr, Pierre Stevens, Enrique Garcia, Sid Frankel, Karen Thompson, and general manager Ben Earle.

In May 2024, the number of candidates did not exceed positions available so all qualified candidates were accepted. Enrique Garcia (ON), Damon Johnston (MB), Amal Khan (SK), Andrew McCann (ON), Hannah Pazderka (AB), Sheila Regehr (ON), and Karen Thompson (ON) were renewed. In September 2024, Josephine Grey (ON) and Jacob Rudolph were appointed to fill vacant positions. They, along with Brian Einarson (BC), Sid Frankel (MB), John Rook (AB), and Pierre Stevens (NS) are seeking renewed terms this year.

We express our deep gratitude to Andrew McCann who is stepping down part way through his term due to increased work and family demands on his time. Andrew continues to support our work and to inspire others. His amazing work on the BI Now campaign lives on as pictures of the signs, t-shirts and marches appear at election rallies and in media articles. The BI Now video has a prominent place on our website and is as powerful and relevant as ever.

BICN has dedicated part-time personnel but no regular employees. That means we rely on directors with different skill sets and significant accountability, with flexibility and time to participate in the work. The diversity of our board is an incredible asset to ensure we benefit from a wide range of perspectives.

To further enhance our inclusivity and diversity, we are increasingly bringing in people from the wider network to provide advice and help as they are able on committees and/or with projects that serve mutual goals. We are very grateful for their participation. We also want to express our deep appreciation to all our emeritus directors over the years. Many are still very active in their own way, including in business and political life, and continue to respond to calls for support and guidance when we ask.

Financial Report

BICN, like many non-profits, continues to face post pandemic funding challenges, now exacerbated by tariffs and their impact on people’s spending and livelihoods. People who can donate are giving to meet immediate needs, at food banks for example, which is necessary but will not solve the income problem that is driving insecurity and hardship. Our expenses remain fairly stable but we continue to draw down assets. Our pursuit of charitable status has been challenging. BICN does not fit with the three regular categories (for example, poverty reduction qualifies but its elimination, as we promote, does not). The fourth category for other purposes is based on case law and will require additional funding for specific legal expertise.

The excellent work we have been able to accomplish is largely due to project funding from government and civil society sources. The Toronto Community Foundation, through the Institute for Change Leaders, funded change leadership training for several people, both in BICN and among others in the movement. The BIG Forum was a collaborative effort among several organizations that has spanned over 2 years, funded by several sponsors and largely administered by BICN. BICN’s revenue and expenses are shown for the last fiscal year only (some BIG revenue is from previous year). The BIG Forum financial report covers the full project length.

BICN Balance Statement (March 31, 2025)	
Assets (Pay Pal, Cash in Bank)	\$34,791.58
Accounts receivable	0
Total Assets (incl. BIG Forum designated funds)	\$34,791.58
Liabilities	0
Accounts payable	0
Equity	
Accrued income - previous years	\$63,179.46
(\$28,387.88 deficit 2024-25)	-\$28,387.88
Total Equity	\$34,791.58
Total Liability and Equity	\$34,791.58

BICN Revenue and Expenses (April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025)	
Revenue	
BICN Board	\$2,814.0
Members	\$3,040.0
Public donations	\$16,095.5
Misc.	\$7.7
BIG Forum designated funds	\$89,783.0
Total Revenue	\$109,943.3
Expenses	
Operating (insurance, legal, bank fees)	\$4,272.0
Zoom	\$1,416.6
Translation	\$278.4
NationBuilder	\$4,401.2
Website Maintenance/Admin	\$2,307.7
Personnel	
General Manager	\$12,000.0
Website News	\$8,250.0
Newsletter	\$5,000.0
Projects	
BIG Forum (funds administered by BICN)	\$96,877.9
Parliamentary event	\$3,527.1
Total Expenses	\$138,331.2
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$28,387.88)

The BIG Forum Financial Report

The BIG Forum, with BICN, academic partners, planning committee members, financial sponsors¹ and supporters, met and exceeded its goals. Note that the financial report does not include the high value of in-kind time and expertise that made the Forum an overwhelming success. Forum funds were administered by BICN, Royal Roads University and University of Ottawa. Some post-Forum projects are still underway. Remaining funds with BICN and Royal Roads will continue to be used to build on the goals and successes of the Forum.

BIG Forum Budget (2023 to March 31, 2025)	
Revenue	
Sponsors	\$119,921.00
Registration fees	\$42,325.03
T-shirt sales	\$1,230.00
Total Revenue	\$163,476.03
Expenses	
Facilities and catering (UofO and external)	\$30,192.42
Technical and interpretation support	\$12,322.93
Travel and accommodation (key speakers, organizers)	\$15,057.82
Support for low-income participation	\$8,351.30
Supplies (inc t-shirts)	\$4,667.12
Students (organizers, volunteers, high school prizes)	\$16,405.64
Website and other communication, translation	\$4,389.25
Personnel	\$17,029.69
Overhead and administration (incl banking fees)	\$6,243.30
Post Forum - Report, translation, website, promotion	\$33,913.39
Total Expenses	\$148,572.86
Balance (BICN designated funds and Royal Roads)	\$14,903.22

¹ Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Public Service Alliance of Canada, Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence, Royal Roads University, University of Ottawa, Carleton University, BICN, Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, Canadian Association of Social Workers, Feed the Need in Durham, Ontario Basic Income Network.

Plans and Priorities 2025/26

Context

- The outlook for the coming year and beyond appears chaotic, unpredictable and honestly frightening. That is enormously challenging for Canada, the people of Canada, and BICN's work for our collective wellbeing.
- We are encouraged by pro-Canada solidarity. BICN remains guided by a human rights foundation and the themes that came out of the BIG Forum: the hope and energy in positive solutions, the abundant evidence, Canada's building blocks, and synergies that solve multiple problems. We will persevere, adapting as circumstances may warrant.
- Since BICN was founded in 2008, we have been through several waves of change, with ups and downs. Our public education, policy development, joint projects and ally-building has brought us to a point where this country is so close to making a basic income guarantee work. There may thus be opportunity in chaos, because we are not starting from scratch. Our strategic direction and human rights valued will guide our work and adaptive planning.

Priorities for 2025/26

Human Rights Foundation

Going forward, you will see BICN being more explicit about the human rights foundation that has always been at the core of our work. It is there in the principles of the BIWW, in our anti-racist statement, in our Policy Options modelled intentionally to provide an adequate standard of living and to reduce inequality.

Our need to be more explicit reflects the fact that not all basic income proposals are similarly motivated. For us, a basic income must not trade income for services. It cannot just capitulate to the disruption of artificial intelligence. It must contribute to human dignity, health, wellbeing and a decent standard of living. It must not only reduce poverty but improve security and equality by ensuring that those more well off pay their fair share. Our more explicit attention is also driven by a need to protect human rights in an increasingly dangerous political environment where they are being undermined and violated by anti-democratic forces.

Strategic Direction

BICN's strategic direction is in two main external streams and one internal:

- 1) Policy leaders focus. Influencing analysis and thinking among policy leaders both in political and public service ranks and in civil society organizations across key sectors such as health, mental health, food security, housing, environment, work and justice. We will explore project funding that would enable us to bring people together to build significantly on our capacity and expertise to encourage timely policy change that meets the needs of Canadians to be resilient and hopeful as economies undergo profound changes. We will continue to prepare analyses and conduct research which will contribute to writing briefs to governments, working to support bills, and working with policy allies.

- 2)Public focus. Public education, knowledge sharing and advocacy geared to wide, diverse audiences, from those looking for research to people who get most of their information in smaller bites via videos and social media. This will include promotion of the themes from the BIGForum Report, and gathering signatures for the Consensus Statement as part of a project that is in development. We'll employ website news, our newsletters that reach many thousands, opinion pieces, webinars, podcasts, events and engagement with media working as much as possible to connect with people across the different sectors and communities in which many of us work.
- 3)For our own governance and operations needs, BICN will work to improve financial sustainability, while continuing to meet requirements as a registered non-profit, draw on Board diversity, and pursue charitable status as resources permit.

Thank you and acknowledgments

The Board of BICN pays respect to Indigenous peoples, who are the traditional knowledge keepers and the traditional guardians of the territories where we live and work on Turtle Island. We acknowledge that much of what many people enjoy today is built on exploited land and labour, including through colonialism and slavery, that inequalities and injustices persist, and that, in our work, we share the goals and commitment to action of many other civil society organizations. We honour all who are part of the continuing fight for social justice and human rights and are committed to change that ensures a better future for all.

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.