



Pivoting to overcome social hurdles + building relations

The impact of rising prices for rent, food, utilities, etc. and our slow recovery from the pandemic has been hard on vulnerable populations in Grey Bruce. Programs like the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and one-time top-ups to various income supports were temporary supports in 2020 and 2021.

Food bank usage data, a good proxy for economic hardship, suggests poverty rates rose in 2022 after pandemic benefits ended. The data collected on Food Bruce Grey (pg 2) shows a decrease in community meals distributed but also does not include many community meal programs that started up again in 2022 after being closed during the pandemic. Many food banks are reporting that they are seeing new people from the community accessing their services.

With the rate of inflation in Ontario at times topping 7% in 2022, food and housing insecurity are becoming ever more widespread. Pandemic benefits in 2020 kept some households above water but they did not address the systemic issues going forward after the benefits ended.

In 2022, the Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force (PTF) leveraged 72+ partnerships; supported collaborative local research and innovative pilots that worked together across many sectors.

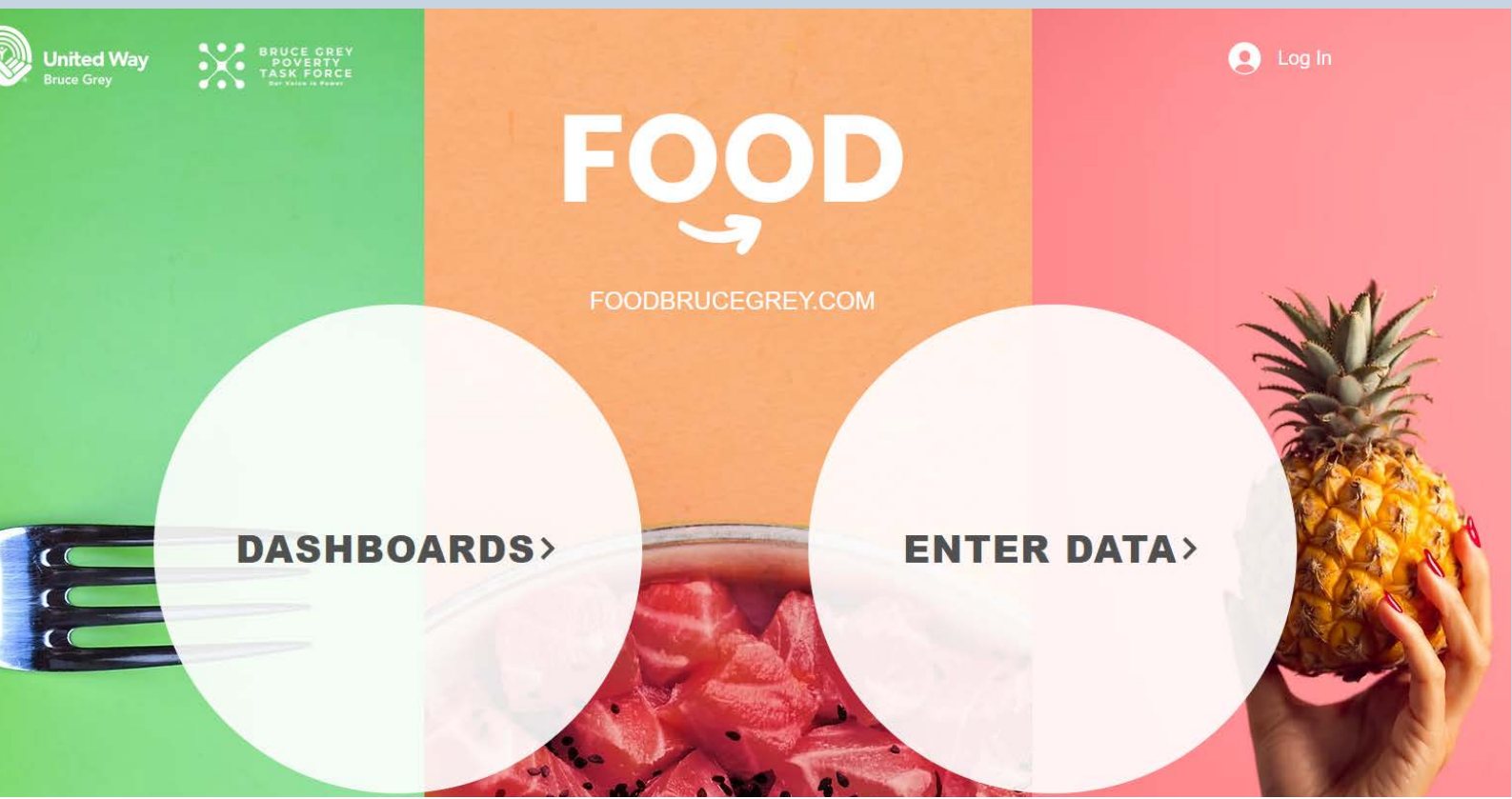
- We took meaningful action to promote and engage in Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.
- While supporting poverty alleviation programs, we also pushed to address the root causes of poverty to advocate for population-level change (reduction or elimination).
- We identified and implemented mutually reinforcing activities to address housing, food and income insecurities.
- We communicated with partners through PTF and action group meetings; and through community updates to help reduce siloed work.
- We hired 1 dedicated staff as a PTF Coordinator and 7 backbone organizations provided dedicated staff to lead action groups.

This Annual Report summarizes our activities in 2022.

2022 collective response in numbers across Grey Bruce:

- 174,404 meals were served (14 out of 22 organizations), averaging 454 meals/day
- 97,290 kg food rescue food diverted, 9,979 kg re-distributed to partners (32 out of 44 organizations)
- 204,978 kg of food was distributed by food banks (18 out of 22) supporting 12,871 HHs, 58,354 individuals
- \$44,545 worth of gift cards were distributed by food banks
- 8,973 kg of fresh produce was donated from producers to food banks and community meal programs
- 3,520 kg of fresh produce was distributed from community gardens (7 out of 18 gardens)
- 11,451 Good Food Boxes were sold, 2,688 subsidized tokens used.
- 23,428 volunteer hours from contributed to these community food programs (39 out of 62 organizations)
- 18,000 kids/day, 5 days/week in 63 schools are offered breakfast through the GB Ontario School Nutrition Program.
- 2,430 individuals were assisted by Grey Bruce Community Volunteer Income Tax Program Network (14 organizations/20 locations)

Sources: FoodBruceGrey.com, GB Coordinated Access Program, CRA/CVITP, Bruce County, GB Ontario Nutrition Program



2022 IMPACT

The Poverty Task Force contributed to:

- **Increases in collaboratives convening with people with lived/living experience:** the Giiwe Sharing Circles have increased in size since its start in 2018. Numbers have grown from 12 to 400 people. A new Youth Sharing Circle was initiated.
- **Increases in the use of collective impact to address poverty through collaborative research studies** - Rent Safe Tenant-Landlord Survey, Giiwe Model, Vital Conversations on Housing, Home Takeover Pilot, consultations on 2022 Ontario Budget and Ontario Health Team programming.
- **Increase in coordination and communication with partners** - we produced 30 community updates in 2022 (a total of 112 to date) with poverty related data, research findings, resources & services;
- **Increases in leadership by local governments in poverty reduction** - Bruce County and Grey County have committed to the poverty reduction work of the Poverty Task Force for the past 10 years. This work was acknowledged during the Provincial and Municipal elections in 2022. We increased the representation of lower-tier councilors attending PTF meetings.
- **Growth of the Grey Bruce Living Wage and Basic Income Campaigns** and the subsequent outreach education through the Income & Employment Security Action Group.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2022	PROJECTS	OUTCOME
Equity to Healthy Food	Rural FoodRescue Hub GB Community Garden Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of program • Support policy and promotion
Striving for Health Equity	Access to Healthcare Services BGDISC.ca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating Health Equity Tool • Support to SOS Mobile Outreach • Data collection and sharing
Housing Security	Rentsafe Survey Community Conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey completed. • Vital Conversations on Housing • Home Takeover Pilot Study
Income Security	Volunteer Income Tax Network Living Wage Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Meeting + Data collected • Basic Income election education • 2022 Living Wage released
Community Voices	Giiwe Sharing Circles Community Voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giiwe Circles growth • Community Voices revisioning • TD Bankability Study

**GB Volunteer Income
Tax Program Network
2022**

**2,430 individuals assisted
2,640 returns filed
32,450 eligible people
14 organizations**

**GB-CVITP Phone
(Owen Sound)**

1,366 calls = 5,490 mins

**Heaviest months
Mar (508 calls)
Apr (259 calls)
May (329 calls)**

**712 tax returns filed
(Jan - Jun 2022)**

PTF Budget Report 2022

Total Budget \$64,352

Funding went towards:

- Wages & Benefits full-time Planning Network Coordinator
- PTF Admin/equipment
- Tamarack Membership
- Giiwe meeting expenditures
- Website maintenance/election education pages
- Grey Bruce Community Income Tax Clinic phone

Grants from Bruce County, Grey County and the United Way of Bruce Grey.

Partner Engagement

In 2022, we met 10 times as the Poverty Task Force. Emergency housing and support services remains a priority with 50 Housing/Homelessness Community of Practice Group virtual meetings. Access to food and addressing income insecurity remain priorities as well with 24 Bi-weekly Food Security Action Group and 8 Monthly Income & Employment Security + 4 Basic Income Working Group meetings.

As we build our work with the Community Safety & Well-Being Plan as an Action Table we 5 times. Our Health Equity Action Group met several times to update the Resources on the Health Equity Spinwheel. Community Voices met in 2021 to plan for new action in 2022 but things did not progress as planned. New strategies are being developed for a new structure, as Getting Ahead closed in 2022

Social Media Platforms

72+

Partner organizations

1,110

**Facebook/Blog
subscribers**

708

Twitter followers

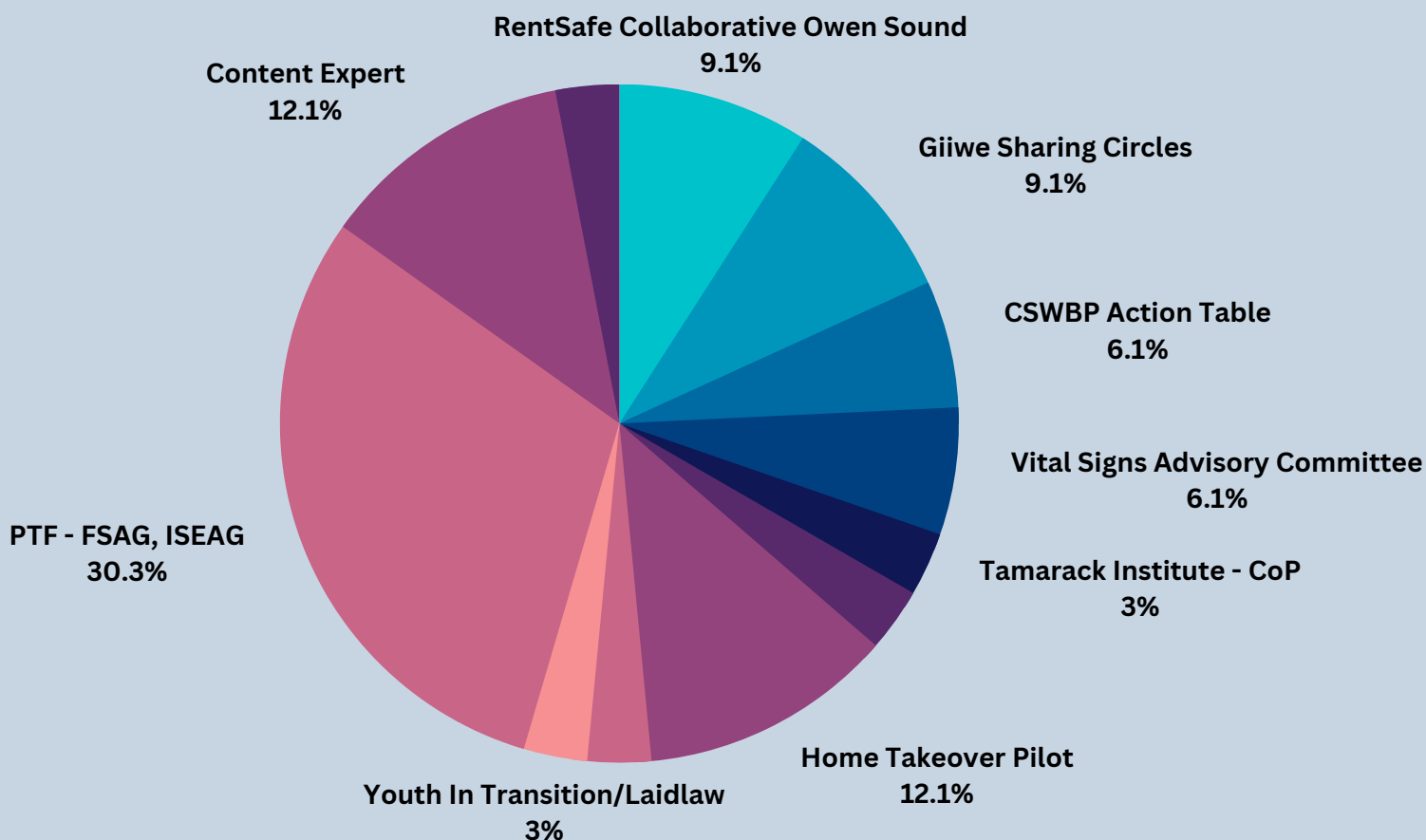
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Community Updates

**Website: <http://povertytaskforce.com>
Twitter: @BGTASKFORCE**

**Facebook: [BruceGreyPovertyTaskForce](https://www.facebook.com/BruceGreyPovertyTaskForce)
povertytaskforce@unitedwaybg.com**

Coordinator's Time Allocation 2022



Projects, Networks & Research Collaboration

Rentsafe Project & Advisory Committee
<https://rentsafe.ca/owensound>

Giiwe Sharing Circle Projects
<https://mwikwedong.com/program/giiwe>

Community Safety & Well-Being Plan Action Table
<https://cswbp-brucegrey.ca/>

Vital Signs Advisory Committee
<https://www.communityfoundationgreybruce.com/im-pact/vitalsigns/>

Community Ending Poverty/Mentor- Mid-Ontario, Rural Network, Tamarack Institute
<https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/>

Grey Bruce Healthy Communities Partnership

Bruce Grey Data Information Sharing Collaborative -
<https://bgdisc.ca/>

Precarious Living Study Advisory Committee
<https://www.planningboard.ca/reports/precario-uslivingstudy/>

Community Drug & Alcohol Strategy Advisory Committee/Opioid Working Group
<https://drugstrategy.org/>

Home Take Over Project
Grey Bruce Public Health/Grey County Housing
<https://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/Your-Environment/Healthy-Housing/Home-Takeover>

Youth in Transition Project
Community Foundation GB/Laidlaw Foundation

Poverty, Voting and Elections

In the lead up to the provincial and municipal elections, the Poverty Task Force supported a series of Food Insecurity deputations to municipalities in both counties. We participate in a roundtable meeting regarding the 2022 Ontario Provincial Budget and supported candidates for both elections to develop their platform positions. We developed a website page on voting and understanding the different responsibilities of municipal, provincial and federal level government.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives states that "the central lesson of the pandemic is a very simple one: if the goal of social policy is to reduce poverty, there is no faster way to do it than by directly increasing the income of those living in low income". (Feb 2023 Report Card).

Our election education campaign focused on income solutions - guaranteed basic income, a living wage - and affordable housing. We created a series of education posters that were shared by our 72+ community partners and were prompts for community engagement with potential candidates.

New municipal councilors took on their seats at the end of 2022. As a direct result of our engagement with various lower-tier municipalities, candidates and the community push for more response from lower-tier municipalities to address the housing crisis we have the start of formal representatives attending meetings along with interested councilors.

Poverty reduction actions - affordable housing, living wage and reducing precarious work - are now permanent social infrastructure discussions at lower-tier council meetings.



INCOME SOLUTIONS = ECONOMIC PROSPERITY



We all face financial risk at times. An unexpected loss of income can be devastating.

- CERB was a guaranteed basic income that in combination with housing policies kept people out of poverty.
- A living wage ensures basic needs are met and more.
- Social assistance policies need to reflect today's cost of living.

We need income solutions to overcome setbacks, stay well, manage transitions and create opportunities.

Giiwe Sharing Circles

Indigenous poverty is the most prevalent form of poverty in Canada today. Indigenous poverty has been the inevitable result of multigenerational trauma and colonial policy. The pathway to ending Indigenous poverty requires Indigenous peoples and communities to be at the centre of the conversation, addressing systemic racism, addressing trauma, creating safe spaces to heal and building self-determination within Indigenous communities and Indigenous-led organizations.

Giiwe (“s/he goes home” in Anishinaabemowin) is a model for improving coordination and relations among Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations in Bruce County and Grey County; as well as on Saugeen First Nation and Nawashiingmiing First Nation. In 2018, we came together with 12 people in a Sharing Circle focused on Indigenous homelessness. In 2022, we have 400 people involved.

Since the inception of the Grey Bruce By Names List, there has been 613 households added. Of these, 170 households self-identified as Indigenous. This is 28%, which is disproportionate to the overall population of Grey Bruce.

The Poverty Task Force has facilitated new partnerships focused on youth-in-transition, homelessness, child protection and supported the role of the Giiwe Coordinator. In 2022, 6 sharing circles and several full day retreats were held. The Giiwe Coordinator also provided cultural mindfulness workshops with many partners including City of Owen Sound staff, OPP and municipal/city police. Giiwe has been presented at international, national and local housing/poverty reduction conferences including Vital Signs Conversation on Housing. A research paper of the model has been written to be presented at an international public health conference.

DID YOU KNOW?



Poverty is not neutral. Indigenous people live in poverty as a direct result of Colonial and federal laws that have stripped people of their traditional lands, languages, livelihoods, cultures, and children.

- 1 in 4 (25%) Indigenous people in Canada live in poverty
- 4 in 10 (40%) Indigenous children live in poverty
- Over 150,000 children in 150 years attended residential schools. **Some 80,000 survived.**
- **1,181** Indigenous women and girls were murdered or missing (1980 and 2012)—a homicide rate roughly 6 times the national average



Shko Naniibwida - Standing Strong Together for truth and reconciliation.

MOVING FORWARD IN 2023

The Poverty Task Force has created a Collective Impact Framework for 2023 based on the collaborative work identified by our Action Groups.

It is positive to see the work of the SOS Mobile Outreach project consolidating its work in Grey County. In Dec 2022, 159 people were actively homeless and 132 of these individuals were chronically homeless but 4 people were homed. The outreach model for street involved people with complex needs remains an excellent example of collective impact. This is a critical program that should remain part of the Ontario Health Team approach.

We are also seeing a decrease in the number of people dying of fatal overdoses although we are still seeing a high number of overdoses as reported by the Grey Bruce Public Health/Opioid Working Group. It would appear from January 2023 data that we shall continue to see large number of people, including new people accessing food banks, community meal programs and housing support.

Recent demographic data from Bruce County found that 45% of renters spent more than 30% of income on housing; and 18% of renters spent over 50% on housing. There is work to be done on increasing the housing stock for people with low income, providing transitional housing with wrap mental health and addiction supports. Ensuring crisis supports are well-funded to provide Short Term Shelter Program, warming stations and access points for engagement such as street drop-in programs is also critical.

A focus on reducing poverty is needed. There are few things more central to well-being than having the money to afford a safe place to sleep, good food to eat, and the resources to participate in the life of one's community.

With no additional pandemic benefits for households and service providers, the Poverty Task Force will continue to coordinate poverty reduction efforts as outlined in our Collective Impact Framework 2023 found on page 9.

Acknowledgements

We recognize the incredible work that over 72+ Poverty Task Force members, volunteers and the staff have done in response to COVID19. A special thank you to the Bruce County, Grey County and the United Way of Bruce Grey for their leadership and support to the Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force.



COLLECTIVE IMPACT FRAMEWORK

Our collective impact efforts seek to inform policies and support upstream interventions to address poverty-related community issues. Together we have a common agenda, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication and backbone infrastructure.

January 2023

Collective Action

The Poverty Task Force is made up of 72+ organizations that work across priority sectors to reinforce activities that contribute to reducing poverty.

Evidence-informed/best practices

We draw upon local and national best practices; examine and test them in Grey Bruce context.

Data Driven

We collect local data on social determinants of health, including housing/homelessness, food insecurity, employment and income.

HOUSING SECURITY

Release the Rentsafe Tenant-Landlord Survey and host a series of engagements with stakeholders.

Create safe spaces for meaningful learning to engage communities with data/information and build relationships toward solutions.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Ensure the Community Voices group of grounded experts are actively engaged with PTF collective action.

Contribute to engaging with community partners through Indigenous-led Giiwe Sharing Circles.

FOOD SECURITY

Support the expansion of a rural food rescue program to create and strengthen alliances between rural food banks, community meal programs and community gardens.

Contribute to the governance, sustainability and promotion of the Grey Bruce Good Food Box.

INCOME SECURITY

Carry out an Impact Study on the Grey Bruce Community Volunteer Income Tax Program in partnership with CVITP Network partners.

Contribute to a Grey Bruce Living Wage Campaign to engage with employers to reduce precarious employment.

DATA

Contribute to participatory data collection and analysis on poverty-related issues such as housing, precarious work, etc.

Develop M&E strategy for reporting against IMPACT Report baseline.

HEALTH EQUITY

Contribute to Home Takeovers pilot project in Grey County.

Contribute to Mobile Health Outreach Program to ensure access to services for vulnerable populations.

TRUTH & RECONCILIATION CALL TO ACTIONS

We shall build better relations. The following OFIFC principles will guide our work:

- Respect Indigenous culture and spiritualities as a foundation for Indigenous identity.
- Understand and respect Indigenous leadership
- Respond to Indigenous-led community priorities
- Collaborate and co-develop programs with Indigenous communities
- Respect Indigenous Diversity - no pan-Indigenous programming
- Ensure equity for all Indigenous people including women, Two Spirit, Indigi-queer and LGBTQQIA+
- Build trust and relations through Indigenous-led sharing circles