



Basic Income Guarantee
Revenu de base garanti

23-26 May/Mai 2024 • Ottawa • CANADA



BIG Success in the Making:
Knowledge, Connection, Action

Report on The Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) Forum
May 23-26, 2024



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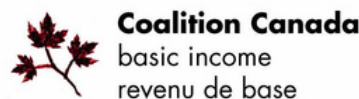
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Executive Summary

This report describes a watershed event in the development of the basic income movement in Canada, the first Canadian Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) Forum, held in Ottawa, May 23-26, 2024. The forum gathered more than 300 people from various sectors, including advocates, researchers, service providers, government representatives and Indigenous leaders. It had three goals: dissemination of knowledge, the development of the movement, and increasing its capacity to take action.

A basic income is a regular, unconditional cash transfer from government to individuals to enable everyone to meet their basic needs, participate in society and live with dignity, without behavioural conditions for work, training or anything else. The approach favoured in Canada is that of a basic income guarantee that takes other income into account and provides most help to those who need it most.

Basic income is a strategic investment to improve wellbeing. It can tackle the polycrisis we are facing far more effectively than our current patchwork of programs.

Four over-arching themes characterized the engagement at the Forum:

- There is energy and hope that basic income will be adopted because it offers a pragmatic and effective solution to so many of our social, political and economic problems.
- Basic income is the quintessential evidence-based policy. More than six decades of cross-disciplinary, multi-method research in various jurisdictions demonstrate conclusively that basic income yields positive effects on poverty reduction, health, mental health, education, employment and crime reduction.
- Canada has a unique set of building blocks for implementation of a basic income, including longstanding partial basic incomes for families with children and seniors, policy learning from these programs, provincial and territorial innovations and statistical modelling; as well as a vibrant and engaged civil society sector.
- Basic income is a synergistic policy instrument that can improve multiple problems rather than placing each problem in a separate silo for solution.

The Forum has activated pan-Canadian networks of individuals and organizations working toward common goals that the adoption of a basic income supports. This provides an important opportunity for governments to join with civil society in this endeavour.



A Message from Organizers

We can't say enough about the wonderful people who came together to make The 2024 Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) Forum such an energizing and inspiring success. This was a landmark event for Canada, the first open public forum focused on income security for all in the form of a basic income guarantee. Unconditional income guarantees have been in place for decades for seniors and families with children under 18 and have enormous potential to make lives better for all age groups and situations.

Some participants were new to basic income, others were experts. There were people who run food banks and those who've had to use them, basic income pilot designers and recipients, mayors, community activists, young people, seniors, parents, physicians, economists, researchers and policy experts in areas from housing to mental health, Indigenous leaders, parliamentarians and civil society leaders. Our sponsors included organizations representing labour, research, the care sector, social work, faith and food security.

What made it so successful? The vast majority of participants were actively present and engaged, wholeheartedly open, listening to each other and respectful of differences. People were excited to be part of a solution to make people's lives better, one that can be transformative. People came away with new knowledge and insights, new, renewed or deeper connections to people and ideas, and enhanced skills and capacity for action.

Each person's experience was unique based on their own background and the sessions in which they participated. What we held in common was shared goals, an understanding of the urgency of the impacts of the polycrisis Canadians are facing, and the energy that comes with knowing that there are feasible, evidence-backed solutions. It is rewarding and exciting to work for something that matters so very much to our families and communities across the country. Working together provides hope, courage and the ability to persevere in the face of challenges until the Forum's success is matched by public policy success.

Our report highlights some overarching themes, such as the need for governments, across aisles, departments and jurisdictions, to work together on income security policy. It also connects the dots across some of the major issues and sectors that lead people to an interest in a basic income guarantee, showing how acknowledging synergies is better, and a better bargain, than treating issues in silos.

We invite everyone reading this report to join the journey of hope and courage. We especially encourage government decision-makers and civil society sector leaders to work with us. There is constructive power in having citizens who believe that a better future is possible and who also have the capacity to contribute to it themselves.

Best and BIGgest wishes for a better future for all,
Tracy Smith-Carrier and Sheila Regehr

Part 1: About The BIG Forum

A First of Its Kind

The BIG Forum was held May 23-26, 2024 in Ottawa at the University of Ottawa and virtually. It brought together over 300 amazing people excited to be working for shared solutions at a time when Canadians are anxious and increasingly struggling to afford basics like food and housing, to find decent employment, and to manage crises in mental health, extreme weather events and more.

The BIG Forum was:

- The first pan-Canadian public forum focused on unconditional income security for all.
- The first uniquely Canadian conference on a basic income guarantee as a public policy that supports many goals and works in the context of our political and policy context.
- The first multi-disciplinary forum on a basic income guarantee supported by sponsors and participants from across sectors and all walks of life, from both civil society and governments.

The Forum's goals were to strengthen:

- Knowledge – about evidence and analysis on basic income
- Connection – across sectors, ideas and people
- Action – with skills and strategies to influence the public and government decision-makers.



This was, by design, a highly participatory event. Over three days, there were six plenaries and many more concurrent breakout sessions, almost all featuring panels with multiple speakers bringing diverse viewpoints and subject expertise. The sessions also included films, music, and skills and training workshops. A significant portion of the program was allocated to individual and group submissions made by people wanting to share their experiences, research and accomplishments, and to learn from others.



Feedback received from speakers and participants on site, in follow-up emails and conversations, and through an email survey, indicated it was an incredible success.

One notable concern, however, was less-than-hoped-for federal presence given the Ottawa location.

“We have the evidence ... we now need action more than ever.” – FORUM SURVEY RESPONDENT

This report is a must read for those on Parliament Hill.

On the positive side, speakers and participants included decision-makers from municipal, provincial, territorial and federal governments, and there are allies across parties in Parliament. Hopefully the Forum report offers a basis for strengthened relationships and action going forward. We are in challenging political times—all the more reason to work for practical solutions for what matters most to people at this critical moment.

This report provides examples of the Forum’s rich discussions, highlighting overarching themes that came up in multiple sessions. It also outlines the role that income security plays in areas like health, work and gender equality.

The Forum’s key goals were met and exceeded. In doing so, they further solidify the case that Canada urgently needs a basic income guarantee—and that it is well-equipped to design and deliver it.

What is a basic income guarantee?

For those reading this report who are less familiar with the subject, here are some essentials. A basic income is a regular, unconditional cash transfer from government to individuals to enable everyone to meet their basic needs, participate in society and live with dignity, regardless of work status. It provides income as well as security and the freedom to decide and act on what is most important in a person’s situation.

Canada’s current income programs are a patchwork that privileges some people and disadvantages, even traps, others. For example, a 65-year old who gets a basic income in the form of Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement does far better than almost everyone on social assistance. That social assistance recipient could be a single mom with high needs children, a well-educated 24-year old who still can’t get a decent-paying job, a 59-year whose body isn’t up to the hard physical labour of his job anymore, a 40-year old whose job was replaced by a machine, or someone with an episodic disability. Social assistance rates can be less than half the poverty line and there are many rules to follow. Surveillance often erodes dignity and stigma undermines social connections. Employment effort often doesn’t get rewarded. A basic income is based on the principle that everyone has the right to comparable income security. We are all deserving.

A basic income works in synergy with public services and programs like health care and education and programs that meet needs beyond the basics, like supports for people with disabilities. Both income and public services are essential to our well-being as individuals and as a country.

A basic income **guarantee** is a delivery model that takes other income into account. It ensures greatest benefit matches greatest need, reducing gradually as other income rises. People with higher incomes wouldn’t get a basic income but they would have the security of the guarantee. No matter what happens in life, it is there for everyone as needed. And everyone benefits from a healthier society with fewer costly problems. Having income to meet basic needs means people have greater capacity to tackle other challenges and fulfill other aspirations.

Why does the 'guarantee' model matter?

Income is the leading social determinant of health and well-being. The amount and distribution of income is important. Steep inequality in a society is a cause of many problems, and a basic income model that takes other income into account makes sure that those who need help most get it. It reduces inequality overall by not providing extra income to those who are already doing better than most.

The security of being able to depend on an income source is equally important. Income security can improve many aspects of our lives. It enables people to envision and plan for a future. It reduces the anxiety and stress of precarious situations. It can be of enormous benefit in managing the impact of a crisis like extreme weather events as well accidents, illnesses and other setbacks that can befall any one of us over the course of our lives.

In Canada, in particular, a basic income guarantee model matters for practical and political reasons. Income guarantees provided to seniors and children use this model. Those guarantees are strongly supported by the public and are backed by evidence that they are a good investment. With this foundation, there is consensus among many basic income proponents in Canada on the kind of basic income guarantee that would improve security, prevent poverty and reduce inequality. This Consensus Statement is in Appendix C.



“Amazing speakers and facilitation.”

– FORUM SURVEY RESPONDENT





Part 2: Overarching Themes

We identify four themes that came up in various ways throughout the Forum.

1. There is energy and hope in positive, feasible solutions.

People felt energized and excited to work for a positive solution, to be part of collective efforts that offer hope because the solution is feasible and when implemented can work quickly to improve lives. Basic income guarantee design challenges can be met. We can start now and improve as we go.

The discussions acknowledged that the political climate in Canada (and elsewhere) is becoming more polarized and partisan, and this is a challenge to sound policymaking in the public interest for the present and longer term. Knowing there is a rapid solution makes hope and perseverance possible.

In a political environment where decision-makers are often criticized for being out of touch with what matters to people, basic income offers an opportunity to energize and excite people across the country by starting to deliver better income security along with a vision of hope. There is constructive power in having citizens who not only believe that a better future is possible but also have the capacity to contribute to it themselves.

2. The evidence for a basic income guarantee is abundant.

The hope and confidence of theme one is anchored in an abundance of evidence highlighted by presenters and participants showing that:

- When people have adequate income their lives are better; when people do better, society does better and other problems and challenges are more manageable;
- Unconditional income gets better results than highly-controlled and monitored support;
- Income and public services work together for greater efficiency and cost effectiveness;
- The 'work disincentive' critique of basic income is a myth. Unconditional income enables a wide range of valuable work and economic activities that would not otherwise be possible, including entrepreneurship.

Overall, participants were concerned that people are suffering and the situation is getting worse, that the evidence is sufficiently strong to act upon, and that waiting is dangerous.

The breadth and depth of evidence came out during the Forum's sessions:

- Research from various fields, for example: on income as the leading social determinant of health; the damaging effects of poverty and discrimination, and the trauma of violence; the societal problems caused by steep inequality; on what helps or hurts our mental health; on the precarity and low wages that characterize much of our labour market today; and on the disruptive impact of automation and artificial intelligence.

- There are government studies, consultations and reports on these issues, including on poverty, gender equality, racism, and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
- Experience and analysis of existing income programs that get good results. Unconditional income guarantees for seniors and families with children have reduced poverty, improved well-being and narrowed inequality for those groups.
- Experience with meagre, conditional programs like social assistance that consistently reflect poor results tells us what needs to change.
- Evidence from basic income pilots and research, in Manitoba and Ontario, in Canada and around the world, shows a consistent pattern of positive outcomes in: physical and mental health; education; community engagement; work options; reductions in violence; empowerment, in particular among equity denied groups; and trust.
- Concern about a 'work disincentive' is not supported by the evidence. There are, for some adults, transfers of work effort from paid employment to unpaid care work, especially for women with young children, and to educational pursuits. Such transfers have positive societal benefits. Other adults are able to do more work, paid and unpaid, as health improves. For those who are overworked, often by holding multiple jobs, being able to reduce their load is also a positive, healthy outcome.
- Deeper, qualitative information from recipients in pilots shows that a basic income can be transformative, opening up options that would otherwise be inaccessible. Starting a business, getting a degree, getting off of medication, building support networks to overcome the effects of isolation, finding a better job fit, and volunteering in the community to help others are examples.
- We have policy learning from pandemic benefits like the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) that saved livelihoods and the economy. It was not a basic income and had many flaws. But in the ways it most resembled a basic income, related to its adequacy and unconditionality, allowing people to spend it on their self-determined needs and priorities, it showed results similar to many pilots.
- We also have learning from statistical modelling of basic income designs. We can see how much poverty and inequality are reduced in different options, and how benefits and costs can be fairly distributed.

There were discussions about the extent to which evidence really does inform policy, the impact that human stories can have, and the role that personal beliefs and ideology play in decision-making. Most civil society participants considered the evidence for a basic income guarantee sufficient for governments to act now, especially in the face of intensifying need and the urgency required to meet it.

3. Canada has a unique set of building blocks.

The basic income movement is international in scope. There is much written about the theory, history and experience of basic income around the globe. As our World Bank expert noted, when the pandemic hit, almost every country rapidly and successfully responded to the twin health and economic crises with unconditional cash transfers to people. There is a great deal to learn from that experience.

However, there is no better place to look for experience in designing a basic income guarantee than to turn to Canada. That was the core rationale for holding the BIG Forum.





Canada has a particular context. It is a federation, and as such there are divided and shared powers and responsibilities between federal and provincial and territorial governments, an asymmetrical relationship with Québec, and First Nations governance on reserve. We are a country built on the colonization of Indigenous peoples, and we are a country of immigrants from around the world that espouses human rights yet remains beset with racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination. We are a wealthy country with pockets of deep poverty. We have a diverse and engaged civil society. We are urban and rural, and reflect countless differences even while we share much in common. There are challenges but we make it work, through debate, consultation, compromise and consensus that is hard won.

One of our great success stories is about unconditional income guarantees for families with children. They took shape in the 1990s through a federal-provincial/territorial framework to meet a need (support for families because market economy wages don't take family size into account) with goals (reduce child poverty and support parental labour force participation). Modest federal benefits grew over the years as they proved effective. Almost all provinces and territories now have child benefits too, most administered by the Canada Revenue Agency. Families, children, communities and the economy have benefitted ever since.

Guaranteed incomes for seniors have been around for many more decades. The new Disability Benefit is off to a slow start, but it has been initiated. Quebec has its own basic income program for people with disabilities and Newfoundland and Labrador has basic income programs for specific populations too. Many civil society organizations working in areas from food security to mental health to the environment are calling for a basic income, as does the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report (Call to Justice 4.5). There is no expectation that things will be easy or smooth but our governments should believe that the people of this country are worth it and have confidence to get it done.

Forum participants were encouraged by reports on initiatives in several provinces and territories from Prince Edward Island to Manitoba, Northwest Territories and Yukon taken by governments and/or by civil society that are moving in the direction of a basic income. But there are limits to provincial and territorial capacity to deliver a basic income on their own. It was also encouraging to see many municipalities across the country passing resolutions in support of a basic income. Local governments are struggling with needs they have neither the mandate nor the resources to meet.

Taxpayers and all citizens and residents benefit when each order of government does what it does best. The federal government must play its part, in line with its successful and well-established role in ensuring income guarantees for seniors and families with children as well as the smaller unconditional income support provided to single people and families with low and modest income through the GST credit. It has programs to build on and statistical modelling capacity that many other countries do not, offering valuable evidence and tools to support good policy design.

At the Forum, there was wide support for federal leadership to establish a national framework for a basic income guarantee that brings governments, Indigenous leaders and civil society to the table.

Some community organizations said they wanted a seat at the table and were surprised to learn that there actually is no table or focal point for income security the way that there is for housing, for example, or for the environment. Our machinery of government puts income security in program silos that promote gaps and leave people behind.

There were also interesting discussions related to governments and the matter of how to create political will. Noting that political will can be a rather vague term, and that polling shows wide public support for a basic income, some speakers said that it is more accurate to say we need political courage.

Civil society is doing its courageous part with few financial and human resources, many as volunteers, others as workers in non-profit organizations. Some who live with low-income or were in a basic income pilot face insults and abuse for speaking up and yet they bravely continue to make their voices heard. It's time for the federal government to step up and assume its responsibility, to invite others to the table, and to actively support intergovernmental cooperation to make a basic income guarantee a reality.

4. Synergies are a better value than silos.

Income security plays a pivotal role in a multitude of interconnected issues and goals. The Forum was set up to explore those connections. Many of the discussions addressed relationships between public services and income, some working, some needing to change. For example, people need money to stay healthy and housed. But health care policy and housing policy tend to operate in their own silos that often don't include income. Income, however, helps people stay healthy, reducing demand on health care services, especially in hospitals. Once patients are discharged from hospital, income that ensures decent food, shelter and care will speed recovery and prevent readmissions, often to the expensive emergency room. Health care thus gets better results and is more affordable when income security enables people to live in healthier circumstances.

Some income-related benefits are less effective than they could be when they are siloed. If a benefit is tied only to housing, for example, it does not help the person whose pressing need is for a car repair to keep the job that pays the rent. The unconditional nature of a basic income makes it more effective than if people's hands are tied by conditions or layers of bureaucracy.

A basic income guarantee can improve synergies, supporting those that work (like Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement that work with services for seniors), and enabling a redesign of discriminatory, wasteful and harmful parts of our system to empower and build capacity rather than to surveil, monitor and control.

“I love that it happened!”

— FORUM SURVEY RESPONDENT

Improving income security should be seen as a key part of other strategies to increase success rates. A basic income guarantee is not a panacea; it will not solve all societal problems but it can make many of them smaller and more manageable. Part 3 outlines several more areas that could benefit from breaking down silos and working more holistically. It is a key way to answer concerns about the cost of a basic income guarantee because it shows how better allocation of resources gets better results.

Part 3: Connecting the Dots

People become interested in basic income for many reasons. Many of the Forum’s participants are part of organizations whose primary mandate is something else (albeit related), like poverty reduction, human rights, mental health, food security, housing, or the environment. Sometimes it seems a struggle to find ‘the story’, ‘the definitive evidence’, ‘the elevator pitch’ or ‘the strategy’ that will convince the public and decision-makers that a basic income is sound, effective public policy.

In reality, there are indeed many stories and challenges ... and routes to engage people. Unconditional income security is a common denominator, offering a solution that can reduce unnecessary complexity. It is important to highlight how the dots connect with a basic income, with the capacity to support people to pursue what matters most to them. Working across siloes was thus a key theme at the Forum. Another seems to be emerging. A few sessions at the Forum drew attention to the need to situate basic income more concretely in the context of what else is needed in a subject area. It’s a recognition that basic income does not fix everything, yet it helps a great deal, even if it seems outside the usual box. It’s understanding that basic income security does not replace or provide an alternative to other needed solutions, as some criticisms have suggested. Rather it can be a crucial component of achieving diverse goals.

Topics addressed at the Forum as well as their intersections with basic income included: Care; Environment; Food Security; Gender Equality; Governance and Democracy; Health; Housing; Human Rights; Indigenous Issues; Mental Health; Racial Justice; Work and Employment. Areas like economic development, business and entrepreneurship, and technological innovation were important too. We can’t cover all the issues here but flag that it is encouraging that experts and advocates in varied fields are pursuing different ideas and forms of analysis.

The goal of food security, for example, requires more than ensuring people have money to buy nutritious food. There are food system issues, supply, sovereignty, labour issues for farmers and fishers, the impact of climate change, the role of charities and businesses. Income security can, however, reduce the swelling ranks of food bank clients, support local growers and more, adding capacity to address food system issues.

“People with great experience, knowledge & openness to still learn.”

– FORUM SURVEY RESPONDENT



If the goal is better employment conditions for workers, a basic income is not an alternative to regulations, minimum wages, better job security, or employment and pay equity. It can, however, make it possible for people to survive if their paid work, or Employment Insurance, isn’t enough and give them options and bargaining power to do better.

Gender and racial equality goals similarly are not going to be met by basic income alone. It is not a replacement for decent and flexible paid labour force participation, nor is it an alternative to publicly-funded health and care supports.

But it can be an investment in people and communities that fosters more care options. It can help those who need care and those who provide it, without sacrificing their livelihoods, as our current policy regime unfairly demands of women in particular. It can be an investment that is shown to reduce violence, making neighbourhoods safer and reducing harmful interactions with the criminal/legal system.

The place of a basic income within Indigenous governance issues is a critical area. The Call to Justice in the report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls recommends a basic income for all, not just Indigenous people, in their analysis and that approach could be built upon. We are grateful for the participation and contributions of Indigenous leaders at the Forum.

Another wonderful example was provided by one of our featured speakers, Dr. Danielle Martin, in her book on what is needed to make Canada's health care system better. She offered six big ideas, five of them directly related to areas where the health care system itself needs change and then the big basic income idea as a powerful way to help the health care system by enabling people to improve their health.

We hope to see more advocates and organizations stepping out of their box and working for the mutual benefit of all Canadians.



“Great cross section that captured the passionate people working in this movement.”
— FORUM SURVEY RESPONDENT



Where do we go from here?

Canada is facing a polycrisis. People know what many of the solutions are and they want to be a part of them. A basic income guarantee empowers people with the capacity to lead better lives and contribute to the society and economy around them. This is what will make the effects of the polycrisis manageable.

The more than 300 people at the BIG Forum are part of dozens of networks across the country. Civil society is doing more than its fair share of work, public education, research, analysis, community engagement and charitable help to compensate for income security gaps and failures. This is not fair and not sustainable.

We urge all political parties and governments to do their part and work with us for the public good.

Appendix A: Organizers, Sponsors, Speakers, Program

Lead Organizing Partners

- Dr. Tracy Smith-Carrier, School of Humanitarian Studies, Royal Roads University
- Sheila Regehr, Basic Income Canada Network
- Dr. Wendy Gifford, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa

Planning Committee

- Natalie Appleyard, Citizens for Public Justice
- Tom Cooper, Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction
- Jocelyn Dilworth
- Ben Earle, BICN, Feed the Need in Durham
- Tim Ellis, LeadNow
- Joe Foster, Basic Income Ottawa
- Dr. Sid Frankel, BICN, BI Manitoba, University of Manitoba
- Josephine Grey, St. Jamestown Co-op and Oasis Food Hub
- Luc Gosselin, Revenu de base Québec
- Mandy Kay-Raining Bird, Coalition Canada-Basic Income/revenu de base
- Dr. James Mulvale, University of Manitoba
- Wil Robertson, Coalition Canada
- Dr. Hugh Shewell, Professor Emeritus, Carleton University
- Pierre Stevens, BICN, BINS
- Karen Thompson, BICN, GASP
- Dr. Pier-Luc Turcotte, Faculté des sciences de la santé, Université d'Ottawa
- Ken Yang, UBIWorks

Sponsors and Supporters

- We are especially grateful to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for its generous support of the Forum through its Connection Grants.
- Basic Income Canada Network
- Canadian Association of Social Workers
- Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence
- Canadian Union of Postal Workers
- Carleton University School of Social Work
- Le Centre Oblat/A Voice for Justice
- Citizens for Public Justice
- Coalition Canada-Basic Income/Revenu de base
- Energy Mix Productions
- Feed the Need in Durham
- Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction
- Ontario Basic Income Network
- Public Service Alliance of Canada
- Royal Roads University School of Humanitarian Studies
- UBIWorks
- University of Ottawa Center for Research on Health and Nursing

** In expressing our appreciation for the Forum's varied sponsors, we want to note that some may not have an organizational position on basic income or a preferred model for Canada, and that makes their openness to exploring this solution in the interests of reducing poverty and improving equality, security and the well-being of people in this country all the more valuable.*

Featured Speakers

- **Yves-Marie Abraham**, professor at HEC Montréal, where he teaches the sociology of economics and conducts research on the theme of degrowth.
- **Tracy Smith-Carrier**, professor and the Canada Research Chair in Advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the School of Humanitarian Studies at Royal Roads University
- **Evelyn L Forget**, professor of Economics and Community Health Sciences at the University of Manitoba
- **Sid Frankel**, associate professor in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba and national steering committee member of Campaign 2000 to End Child Poverty.
- **Ugo Gentilini**, Global Lead for Social Assistance with the Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice at the World Bank
- **Josephine Grey**, human rights advocate, community organizer, public speaker, founder of Low Income Families Together
- **James Janeiro**, MA, MPP, Director of Policy and Government Relations at the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence
- **Sarah Kennell**, National Director of Public Policy with the Canadian Mental Health Association
- **Rabia Khedr**, National Director of Disability Without Poverty, a founder of Race and Disability Canada, and board member of the Federation of Muslim Women
- **Kerry Lubrick**, retired Ontario public servant with more than 30 years of experience, front line and management, in the field of Human Services
- **Danielle Martin**, MD, CCFP, FCFP, MPP, Chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of Toronto, family physician, leader in Canadian medicine
- **Kim Pate**, Senator, nationally renowned advocate on behalf of some of the most marginalized, victimized, criminalized and institutionalized women and men.
- **Elaine Power** is a Professor in the School of Kinesiology and Health Studies at Queen's University.
- **Sheila Regehr**, a founding member of Basic Income Canada Network, co-author, with Chandra Pasma, of Basic Income: Some Policy Options for Canada
- **Jim Stanford**, Economist and Director of the Centre for Future Work, a labour economics think tank based in Vancouver and Australia
- **Jamie Swift**, writer/activist, author of thirteen books, from forestry and biography to the politics of civil society and basic income.
- **Paul Taylor**, long-time activist, non-profit leader, educator, commentator, and a co-founder of Evenings & Weekends Consulting
- **Jessica Topfer**, former Ontario Basic Income Pilot participant, Executive Director at The Nourish and Develop Foundation
- **Jiaying Zhao**, Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology and the Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability at the University of British Columbia

Program Plenaries

- The BIG Forum: Solutions to Big Issues (public event)
- Plenary 1: What's Work Got to Do With It?
- Plenary 2: Income Security and the Polycrisis
- Plenary 3: Policy and Politics
- Plenary 4: Advocacy and Action
- Closing Plenary with Senator Kim Pate

Breakout Sessions

- Ecological Sustainability and Social Justice
- The Philosophy and Politics of Welfare State Transformation
- Care, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion
- Basic Income and the Social Determinants of Health
- Canadian Research on Basic Income and Income Security
- Basic Income and the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Public Narrative: Telling Our Stories to Inspire Others to Action (training)
- Basic Income as a Tool for Food System Sustainability
- Local/Municipal Perspectives on BIG (with several mayors)
- Policy Learning: Steps and Missteps
- Universal Basic Income: Essential Knowledge (book launch and discussion)
- The Canada Disability Benefit and its relationship to potential national Basic Income
- Basic Income and Food Security
- Indigenous Perspectives on Governance and Basic Income
- Shifting Social Assistance Towards Basic Income (NL, MB, ON, YK)
- Hope Training: Bringing People with Lived Experience into the Basic Income Movement
- GBI: From Empiricism to Implementation (pilots and PEI project)
- Building Allies and Reimagined Pathways
- How to Write an Effective Policy Brief (training)
- Basic Income in Atlantic Canada: What has Worked, and Why
- Arts, Advocacy, and Storytelling
- Constructing the Basic Income Idea (review of pilots, policies; media analysis)
- Living Below the Line (film screening and conversation with co-creators and playwright)
- Pilot Participant Voices (including a short film screening)
- Basic Income Futures and Frontiers (crypto currency, green BI, financing)
- Public Policy and Programs: How They Include or Exclude

For more detail on content and presenters, please see <https://forum2024.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/BIG-Forum-2024-Program.pdf>

Appendix B: Participation

We are thrilled that our aims for size, diversity and geographical scope were realized.

Who joined us

Over 300 participants in all, the vast majority attending in person in Ottawa, and others by video. It was very much a pan-Canadian event. People joined from 63 different municipalities from Whitehorse to St. John's, and from all provinces and the Yukon territory, showcasing a wide geographic representation. The largest number of attendees came from Ontario, with 12 from Manitoba, 11 from British Columbia, and 10 each from Québec and Nova Scotia. We also welcomed a few US and international colleagues. There were about 30 people who registered on-site once the Forum had begun, whom we assume would be from the Ottawa/Hull or surrounding areas.

Participants had different levels of expertise and interests, further highlighting the inclusive nature of the event. Many were volunteers, with significant representation among researchers, policy analysts, front line and senior public administrators, community activists, students, health professionals, and the communications field. The arts, faith, entrepreneurship and public office holders were also identified by participants as their occupation.

Most attendees were a mix of experts, individuals working and advocating for years wanting to collaborate, individuals who are interested and want to learn more, newcomers who are supportive and want to help, and those who are uncertain and wanted questions answered. They all contributed to a vibrant and multifaceted dialogue.

What they told us

Organizers received ongoing feedback through appreciative comments in the sessions, conversations with people in informal settings, and e-mailed follow-up messages from featured speakers and presenters. We received more feedback from 65 responses to an on-line survey.

Among survey respondents, 84% had attended in person, over half were already part of a basic income group or organization, and some also were part of other allied organizations. Most respondents expressed their willingness to stay connected with other participants, marking a successful step forward for the conference, which aimed to help build a stronger advocacy coalition transcending various sectors and communities. Overall, respondents felt that the conference was exceptionally well-organized (notwithstanding a few technical glitches and the difficult choices people had to make in choosing sessions).

Respondents highlighted the value of the Forum for learning, gathering and networking, and the momentum it fostered for movement building and hope. One of the key take-aways among respondents (that also came up repeatedly throughout the Forum) is their belief that with the existing evidence, and the sheer urgency of the need, it's time to move towards more action and sound policymaking.

Appendix C: Consensus Statement On A Basic Income Guarantee

This statement of February 2023 represents the wide consensus of the basic income movement in Canada, including Basic Income Canada Network/Réseau canadien pour le revenu garanti, Coalition Canada-basic income/revenu de base, UBI Works, and many regional and local groups, experts and allies, regarding key characteristics of a desirable basic income guarantee. It does not provide a detailed design; it sets out the parameters to which any basic income guarantee must adhere to be acceptable.

Core Elements

- The basic income guarantee will be available for citizens and residents of Canada, aged 18 to 64 years.
- Benefits will be sufficient to cover basic needs and ensure that no one falls into poverty.
- Benefit amounts will be determined based on taxable income with provisions to rapidly accommodate significant changes in income and family composition.
- Benefits will be reduced gradually as other taxable income increases.
- Benefits will be paid on a regular schedule (e.g., bi-weekly, or monthly).
- Benefits will be paid to individuals.
- No behavioural conditions will be applied (e.g. work requirements, education, life skills training, etc.).
- Application and registration processes will be accessible and accommodate the range of capabilities and circumstances among citizens and residents.

Design

- The basic income guarantee will be designed based on collaboration among federal and provincial and territorial governments, and Indigenous peoples – First Nations, Metis, and Inuit.
- The basic income will be guaranteed by the federal government based on legislation which establishes it as a right.
- Municipal governments are acknowledged as important advocates for a basic income.

Other Programs

- The basic income guarantee should be an essential component of broad publicly funded universal supports and services.
- The basic income guarantee will not replace any publicly delivered social, health or educational services.
- The basic income guarantee will not restrict access to any current or future benefits meant to meet special, exceptional, or other distinct needs and goals beyond basic needs.

Financing

Revenues required for a basic income model will be developed based on two principles:

- Tax fairness
- Contribution to lowering income and wealth inequality.