

Binners' Project



ANNUAL REPORT
2021 – 2022



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Letter from the Director

As I come up to the one-year mark of taking on the Director role at Binnars' Project, I'm amazed to look back at all that has been accomplished over that short period of time. While we continue to see the deep impacts that the pandemic and opioid crisis have had on the community, these also serve as reminders of why the work that we do is so important. Our social enterprise program has seen ongoing recovery and growth over the last year, the [Coffee Cup Revolution](#) returned, and we have been able to make some serious leaps forward in our [Universal Cart Initiative](#).

I came to the Project as someone who admired the work being done from afar, and also identified with the philosophy of centring the voices of those that you serve in the work that you do. I was delighted to discover that what I saw as an outside observer held true to the internal workings of Binnars' Project, and I couldn't be more proud to help lead such a group. I am so grateful to have been able to step into the role surrounded by a team that welcomed and supported me as I came onboard.

Our core staff team has seen some additional changes over the past year: We wished our former Operations Manager, Kevin, a fond farewell as he returned home to France. We also hired two new full-time staff: Kate and Flora; both arriving just in time for our [annual fundraiser](#) where we raised \$30,902!

Our [social enterprise program](#) added two new sorting sites over the course of the year and saw a 34% increase in hours binnars worked compared to last year. While we did not see much of a return to in-person events over the last year, resulting in this number being lower than we'd like, we are happy to report that we are already in discussions with event organizers for the 2022 season. Our team has also continued to work on optimizing operations, and we're confident that the changes made will help ensure the long-term sustainability of our social enterprise programs and increase opportunities for binnars.

I'm so grateful for the opportunity to share with you all of the amazing work we've done over the last year at Binnars' Project. Thank you for taking the time to sit down and read through this report and for any of the ways (big or small) you've supported us. Enjoy!

Sean Miles

Director, Binnars' Project

*Our work takes place on the shared, unceded lands of the
xʷmə·kʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skxwú7mesh (Squamish) &
səlil'wətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples.*



Our Impacts: A Snapshot



\$154,176

WENT DIRECTLY
TO BINNERS



4,156

HOURS GIVEN TO BINNERS
THROUGH OUR SOCIAL
ENTERPRISE PROGRAMS



203

BINNERS ENGAGED
IN OUR PROGRAMS
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



Frazier, Bertha, David, and Brenda enjoy sharing a meal together at our annual Binner Appreciation Party.



Binner's Project

What we do

At its core, Binner's Project is a group of waste-pickers working together to improve their economic opportunities and destigmatize their work. Binner's, also known as dumpster-divers, use refundable containers and other items of value to supplement their income.

To improve binner's economic opportunities, we have created social enterprise programs that work to divert landfill waste at commercial and residential properties, as well as events. These opportunities provide a more stable way for binner's to earn a reliable income, as well as increase binner's ability to divert waste from landfills.

In our effort to destigmatize binner's work, we run a number of advocacy and infrastructure programs that provide visibility to binner's and amplify their voices at the policy level. Infrastructure programs like the Universal Cart Initiative and the Binner's Hook provide valuable tools for binner's to use, making their work more efficient and safe while also recognizing the essential service they provide to our communities. Additionally, advocacy work and community consultations allow binner's to engage in policy discussions, lifting up the voices of those who are often invisible.

Our work is guided by a triple bottom line:



WASTE DIVERSION



SOCIAL INCLUSION



COMMUNITY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

Who Are the Binnners?

Binnners are a vulnerable population, with a range of features that lock in marginalization, poverty, housing insecurity, and political invisibility. Most are dealing with, or have previously dealt with, addictions, mental health issues, physical disabilities, abuse, and/or homelessness. These keep in place barriers to full social and economic inclusion.

Many binnners have barriers to participating in formal, full-time employment and resort to more flexible and entrepreneurial methods that suit their abilities, capacity, and

lifestyle. Their livelihoods stem from refunds received from used containers collected from bins. Binnners positively contribute to our environment by diverting a considerable amount of waste from landfills.

Binnners' Project prides itself on its low-barrier membership model. It's simple, and as we say: *If you bin, you're in.* All it takes to become a member is attendance to three of our weekly Binnners' Meetings. Once a binner becomes a member, they receive a uniform, and can begin participating in income opportunities.

This year we engaged a total of **203 unique binnners** throughout the year



Binner Profile: Eunice

After someone recommended she should come to a meeting a few months before, Eunice finally joined the Project in early 2020. She worked up enough courage to attend a Binnners' Meeting on her own, and has been a consistent member ever since. She has become more involved in our community engagement programs, helping host outreach booths at community events, and even doing some public speaking with groups about her experience working with the Project. Eunice is particularly excited about moving our Binnners' Meetings back indoors in the coming year, as she has missed the opportunity to give feedback as a group, and build community with her fellow binnners.



Binners line up in the alley as our Binners' Meeting continued to be held outside due to the pandemic.

Binners' Meetings

The cornerstone of our programs is our weekly meeting with binners. The Binners' Meetings have been happening every Tuesday since 2016, and are an important constant for binners to return to year after year.

The Binners' Meetings offer a unique opportunity to hear from our membership about what is working for them, and where they see new opportunities. It's from these meetings that many of our pilot programs were initiated, including the Binners Hook, the Universal Cart Initiative, and our social enterprise programs.

Since March 17, 2020, we have been hosting the Binners' Meetings in the alley behind our offices at 312 Main Street.

This is where we hand out vital information to the community, including closures and openings of community services, vaccine clinic locations, and good news like new sorting sites opening. While the alleyway meetings provided a safe way for us to gather during the pandemic, we are so excited to return to in-person meetings in 2022.

This year, we also continued our income replacement program, which we began during the pandemic, offering binners a \$10 honorarium in recognition for the continued loss of shifts as the pandemic continued. We ended the income replacement at the end of March 2022 as the return of summer events means more hours for binners to work.

Social Enterprise Programs

Back-of-House Waste Sorting

The back-of-house waste sorting program was created in 2017 with the aim to provide income opportunities to binners year-round.

This service offers businesses and residential buildings the opportunity to have binners sort through waste on-site in their refuge rooms, ensuring waste is properly diverted and hauler requirements are complied with.

The pandemic continues to impact this program and our ability to provide income opportunities to binners. Even still, we were able to bring on two new sites this year with **BC Housing** and **New Amsterdam Cafe**.

As an additional service offering, we provide data collection services that allow us to generate reports to clients that help them to better understand the makeup of their waste, including contamination rates, trends, and the volume of items diverted from the landfill.

At just one site, we diverted approximately 3 metric tonnes of waste last year

Brenda sorts the waste at one of our Back-of-House Sorting sites.



David checks in at our BC Housing site, a new sorting site this year.



Binner Profile: Lesly

Lesly joined the Project in 2019 and has been a reliable, consistent worker from the beginning. He has always had a preference for weekend shifts, which are sometimes harder to fill. Lesly is recognized by his peers as one of the hardest workers on our team, and while he is definitely a man of few words, he always has the widest smile behind his mask.

Lesly is one of our newest staff members, and when we recently approached him about joining our staff team, he responded with an excited yes and was even willing to sign his paperwork the same day! We're so excited to see what's in store for Lesly in the coming year.

Client Testimonials

"The bidders visit Save On Meats twice a week, and transform our very busy garbage, cardboard and recycling area, and make it Crystal Clean. It's a big job, and I truly appreciate the heart and effort that goes into this task. The bidders are always cheerful and more than willing to go beyond"

Eileen Stanley,
Recover Chef at Save on Meats

"Bidders' has been extremely easy to work with and an effective alternative solution to improving our waste diversion. From their data collection to scheduling flexibility the onsite teams are professional, friendly and accommodating. We look forward to continuing our journey with them."

Nikki Stewart,
Property Manager at Hudson Pacific Properties

Our Back-of-House Sorting partners in 2020-2021 were:



Brian was on the team helping at Mural Festival's Granville Promenade takeover this summer.



Waste Education at Events

Event season is always a highlight for binners participating in the social enterprise program. Binners enjoy getting to interact with the public at zero waste stations where they help guests ensure that materials go into their proper streams, decreasing the amount of waste heading to the landfill.

As the pandemic continued throughout 2021, so did event cancellations. Binners worked just a few events this year including **Car Free Day** and **Vancouver Mural Festival's** Granville Promenade takeover.



Frazier and Brenda are ready at their waste station at Car Free Day's pop up in the West End.

Our event partners in 2020-2021 were:



Measures of Success

Social Enterprise Impacts: A Snapshot



114

BINNERS WERE INVOLVED IN
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROGRAMS



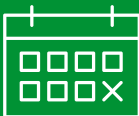
4,156

HOURS OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES



\$71,671

WENT DIRECTLY INTO THE POCKETS OF
BINNERS THROUGH THESE PROGRAMS

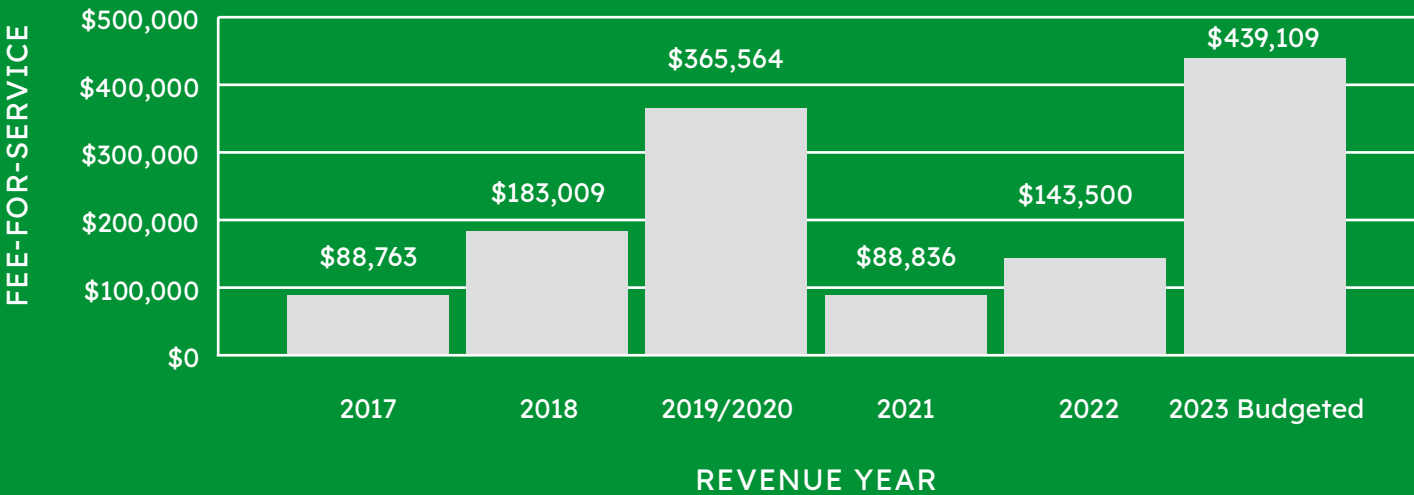


42

INCOME OPPORTUNITIES EACH WEEK,
ON AVERAGE

Financial Overview For more information on our fiscal years, check out page 18.

Social Enterprise Program Revenues 2017-2023



Training Program

This year, we completed the delivery of our eight month training program funded by the **Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction** as part of the Employer Sponsored Training fund. Some highlights of this program include:

- Three field trips to waste facilities, providing an invaluable opportunity for hands-on learning.
- Increase in participants reported self-esteem and confidence on-the-job.
- Marked performance improvements by participants in both leadership and waste-sorting skills.



Canada



This program is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

Advocacy & Community Engagement

Community Engagement

Workshops, Tours, & Presentations

We often receive requests from schools, community groups, and corporate teams for binners to lead workshops or tours. We have since expanded this work as part of our other fee-for-service work to ensure binners' expertise and participation is properly compensated.

This year, we partnered with **Cross Cultural Walking Tours**, who included us as a stop on a number of their community tours, including ones done in partnership with **Overdose Prevention Society** and **DragonBoat BC**. Other partners this year included **St. George's School**, **Yarrow Society**, and **LUSH Cosmetics**.

← Top photo: Peter shares his story in Blood Alley on a tour with Yarrow Society.

Bottom photo: Davin and Bertha get ready to lead a tour with Cross Cultural Walking Tours at the Overdose Prevention Society.



Peer Work

We were grateful to be able to continue much of the peer-to-peer work that became a vital lifeline for many during the pandemic. This included:



The continuation of our monthly wellbeing calls, where binners offer peer-to-peer check-ins over the phone with Binners' Project members, and

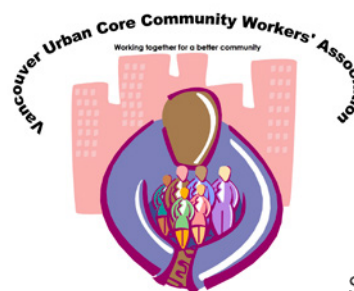


line engagement at the Binners' Meeting where a binner greets members at the meeting, ensuring they feel welcome and receive important news and updates.

First Annual Member Appreciation Party

We marked a new tradition this summer with the inaugural Member Appreciation Party, held on August 19 in Oppenheimer Park. It was a great day to celebrate our members, and gather together as a community for the first time since the pandemic began. Thanks to our friends at [Save on Meats](#) who catered the event with burgers and sides!

Our community engagement partners this year were:



Group photo! Our team celebrated the first annual Binner Appreciation Party this summer at Oppenheimer Park.



Policy Advocacy

As part of our mission to increase the visibility of binners and amplify their voices at the policy level, Binners' Project regularly engages on issues related to sustainability, equity, and community economic development with all levels of government.

This year, we worked closely with **City of Vancouver** staff after the implementation of a 25 cent fee on disposable cups beginning on January 1, 2022 which we argue disproportionately impacts people in poverty.

After our appeal to City Counsellors to revoke the fee was voted down, we have continued working closely with City staff to come up with creative solutions that will help mitigate the impacts of the cup fee on people in poverty.

Without ready access to clean, reusable alternatives, people in poverty will, almost singularly, be responsible for paying into a system that will otherwise not benefit them.

Binners' Project Director,
Sean Miles at City Council
on March 2, 2022.

In the News

We were featured in a number of media stories last year, including features on our Coffee Cup Revolution, the expansion of the refund system to include milk beverage containers, and our advocacy for the removal of the Vancouver-wide fee on coffee cups.

Sean speaks with media at this year's Coffee Cup Revolution.



Binners line up to cash in their cups for 10 cents each at the eighth annual Coffee Cup Revolution.



Coffee Cup Revolution

The Coffee Cup Revolution is Binners' Project's flagship event where binners are invited to bring used coffee cups for a refund at our one-day depot. This event demonstrates binners' willingness and readiness to participate in a refund system on cups, in order to reduce the millions of cups that end up in B.C. landfills each week. This year, we celebrated the eighth annual Coffee Cup Revolution, which made a comeback after being cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic.

The event faced a number of challenges this year as we were forced to move from our founding location at Victory Square Park due to a scheduling conflict with a film resulting in our permit being revoked.

Unfortunately, we had to pause outreach and advertising for the event while we found a new location, which significantly impacted our numbers on the day-of. Ultimately, we set up the event in Oppenheimer Park on a sunny day in October, 2021; welcoming 115 binners who returned 44,400 cups and earning themselves \$4,440 in just 3 hours.

Sheldon transfers a few of the 44,400 coffee cups collected this year to be hauled away by Recycling Alternative.



This year's event was the first time we refunded cups for **10 cents each** in order to align with provincial changes to other refundable containers.



Infrastructure Programs

Binnners Hook

Two of the ten hooks we sold
this year in action!

It was a successful year for the Binnners Hook, as we sold a grand total of 10 hooks last year!

This small but mighty program offers Vancouverites a way to separate their refundables from their blue bin recycling, making binnners' work more accessible, efficient, and safer. As an added plus, hanging a hook in your alley gives binnners' work extra visibility, and lets them know: I see you and I appreciate you.

You can get your Binnners Hook by visiting our website. Binnners Hooks are made locally by our friends at **Metal Mart**.



Universal Cart Initiative

The Universal Cart Initiative is a bold and innovative program to provide binnners ready, legal access to carts that are purpose-built for binning.

The system is simple and works like a bike sharing system: The carts will live on the streets, giving binnners access to use them as they need. Binnners register for the program with just their voice, using a special passphrase to unlock the carts through our custom voice-recognition technology. The program will be free to use, with an orientation required for participants to help them get to know how to use the system, and learn how to hook up the bike attachment.

Work began on the Universal Cart initiative in 2016, and while we've faced a number of delays to launch during the pandemic, we made significant progress on important milestones including the final fabrication of all carts and stations, as well as the hiring of a new full-time position dedicated to development and delivery of the carts program.

We are extremely optimistic about being able to finally deliver this program to the community in the coming fiscal year.



Dwayne tests out our
Universal Cart Prototype.



Annual Fundraiser

After hosting our fundraiser virtually last year, we were so excited to gather in a hybrid in-person and online event in 2021. Our fundraiser is always a fun opportunity for our network to familiarize themselves with Binnners' Project's programs, including hearing directly from binnners themselves. Then, the room works collectively to raise money to reach our goal with each person announcing their donation one by one, live auction-style.

Not a dry eye in the room after Davin shared a bit of his story at this year's fundraiser, where we raised \$30,902 in just half an hour!

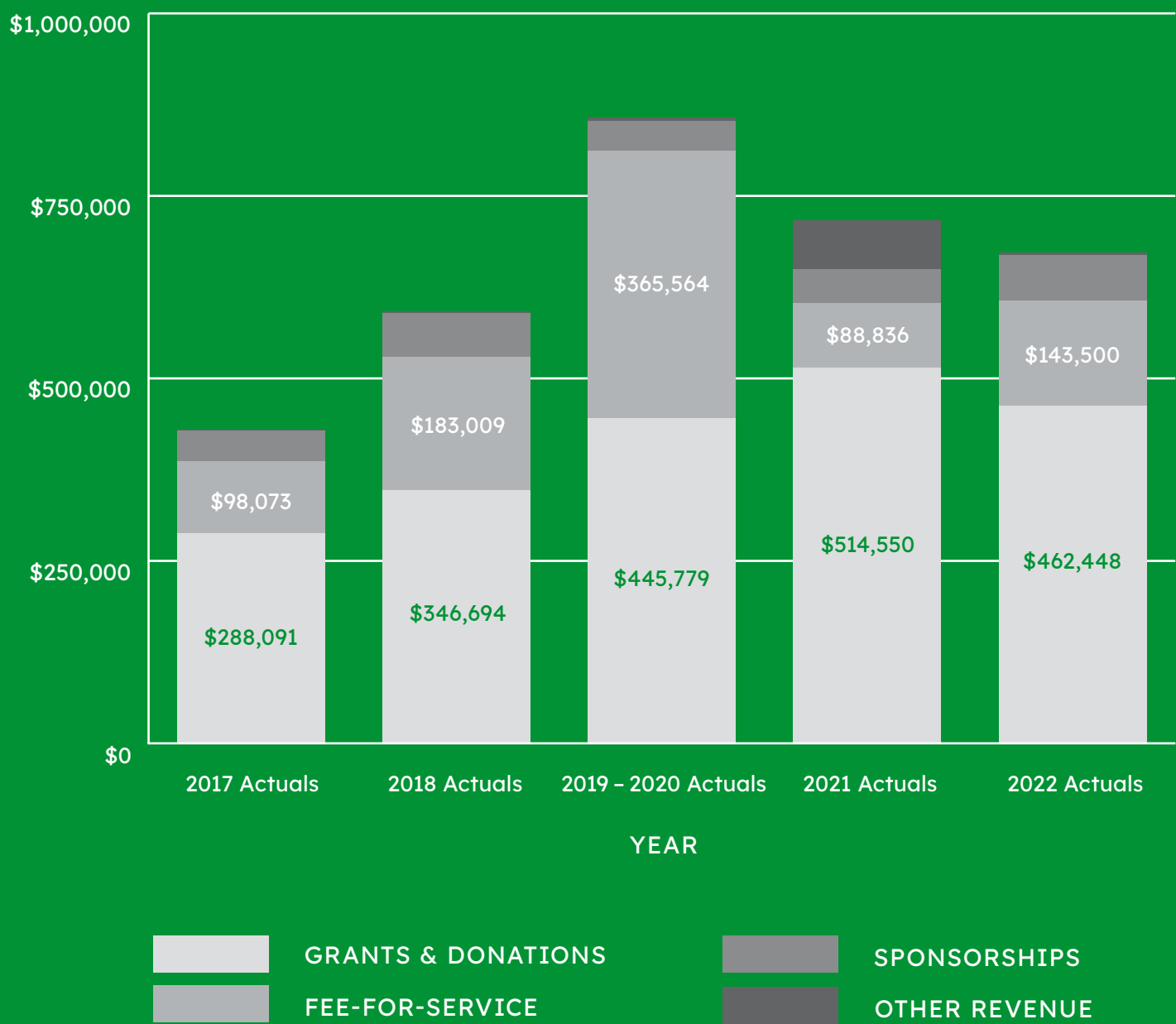
Incredibly, we raised \$30,902 this year to support the continuation of our programs as we continue to make our way out of the pandemic, which has halted a number of our social enterprise contracts. Huge thanks to our host Ash MacLeod, whose team at **Save On Meats** also catered our event!

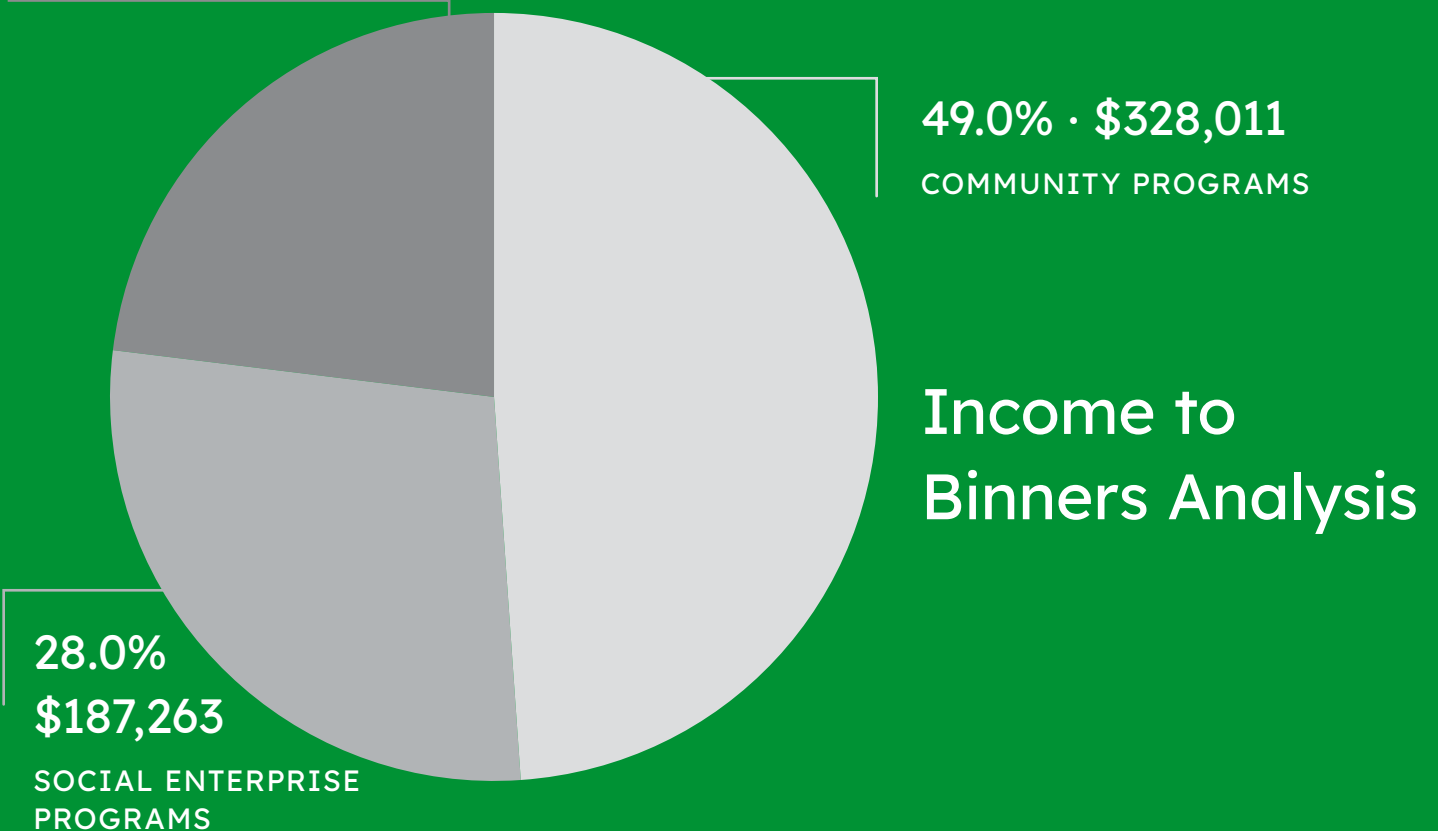
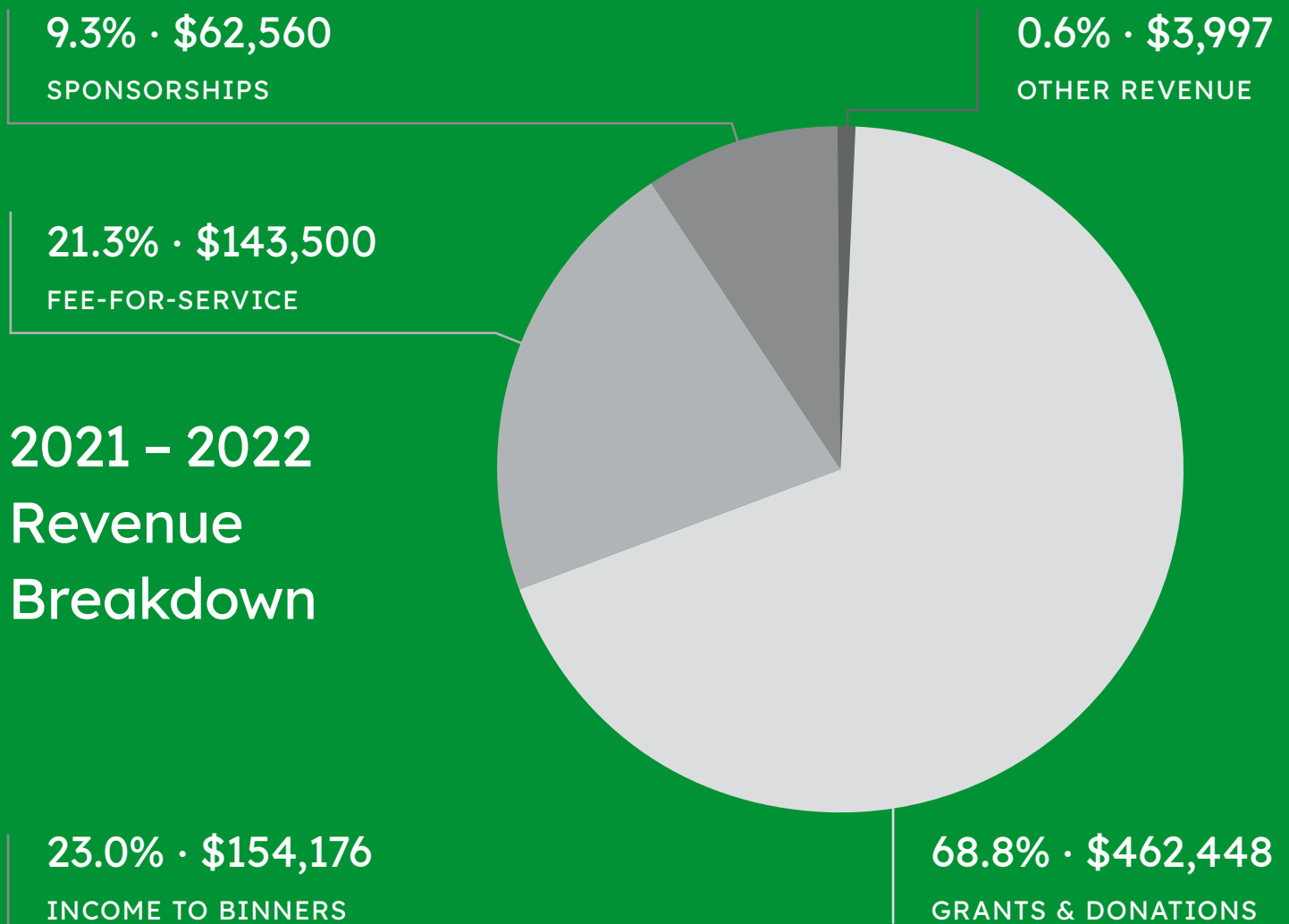


Binners' Project Financial Overview

In 2019, we switched to a April-March fiscal year, and the reporting period for that year was named '2019-2020'. The current fiscal year being reported on is named '2022'.

5 Year Revenue Analysis





Binners' Project Co-founder, →
Ken Lyotier, at the first Coffee
Cup Revolution in 2014.



Ken Lyotier

Ken was a co-founder of Binners' Project, beginning with the first Coffee Cup Revolution. The momentum created from this event led to the first meetings with binners over pizza in the loading bay of UBC Learning Exchange, creating a lasting foundation for what Binners' Project is today.

Ken's vision to promote and legitimize the work of binners has been a long road, with his advocacy for the bottle bill that created the Return-It system beginning in the 1990s. This movement led to his founding of the binner-led depot, United We Can.

In 2014, he co-founded Binners' Project alongside Anna Godefroy and Gabby Korcheva to create a space where binners could organize, generating more opportunities for them to earn income and to amplify their voices as waste-systems experts.

Ken's work lives on, and Binners' Project will continue being fierce advocates for the principles he held dear. We are so proud to be part of Ken's legacy – one that saw clearly the vision of a city where binners were included, supported, and valued. The vision of a Downtown Eastside that thrives from the strength of a robust informal economy. In our last meeting with him he told us: **When binners are included, it will change everything.**

Acknowledgements

Our work takes place on the shared, unceded lands of the xʷmə·kʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skxwú7mesh (Squamish) & səliłwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples.

We acknowledge the binners, whose dedication and effort inspires the incredible team of staff, volunteers, funders, and supporters Binners' Project is fortunate to have in its corner. Additionally, we take this opportunity to recognize the contributions of the following groups and individuals:

In Memoriam

This year we said goodbye to a number of our members who have passed away, including Binners' Project co-founder Ken Lyotier. We also remember: Kurt M., Nikki M., Angelica M., Ledia T., Cathy M., Robyn L., and Sam H.

Core Staff

Core staff are full or part-time with Binners' Project. This year we welcomed three new members to the team: Flora, Kate, and Sean.

- **Sean Miles**, Director
- **Brianne De Man**, Charitable Programs Manager
- **Iris Ting**, Social Enterprise Programs Manager
- **Flora Poole**, Community Programs Coordinator
- **Kate Regala**, Social Enterprise Programs Coordinator
- **Davin Boutang**, Community Specialist
- **Ed Hawkey**, Head Coordinator

Binner Staff

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Alex Martin | • Gerry Maynard |
| • Andrew Jack | • Glenn Grafton |
| • Anne Heidsma | • Jon Guerette |
| • Bertha Cardinal | • Joyce Many Chiefs |
| • Bev Wesley | • Kashe Soukup |
| • Brenda Shorty | • Kelly Angeconeb |
| • Brian Rutledge | • Kyra Dietsch |
| • Brian Wheatley | • Lesly Belcourt |
| • Cameron Vaughan | • Matt Lottridge |
| • Dave Collicott | • Michel Audet |
| • David Washpan | • Peter Josic |
| • Dwayne Flohr | • Sheldon Bowers |
| • Francis Taban | • Shirley Vivian |
| • Gael LePocher | • Zenda Valiant |

Steering Committee

The steering committee provides oversight and direction to Binners' Project.

- **Ann Cooper**, Chair
Project Coordinator, Green Events, City of Vancouver
- **Scott Fraser**
Former President and CEO, Encorp Pacific
- **Steve Johnston**
Executive Director, Community Impact Real Estate Society
- **Alexandra Kenyon**
Associate, HCMA Architecture + Design
- **Jessica Borich**
Principal Strategist, Prism X Strategy
- **Alona Puehse**
CEO, Open Door Group
- **Jeanette Ageson**, Outgoing Chair
Publisher, The Tyee

Advisors, Consultants, and Volunteers

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Lani Brunn | • Annelies Tjebbes |
| • Shane Frei | • Austin Lui |
| • Melanie Kwan | • David Lee |
| • David Schwartz | • Maggie Knight |
| • Derek Senft | |

Partners and Funders



THE BLOOM GROUP
Community. Services. Together.

ARITZIA



SENFT FAMILY FOUNDATION



Vancity
Community Foundation



BENTALL CENTRE
VANCOUVER / BC



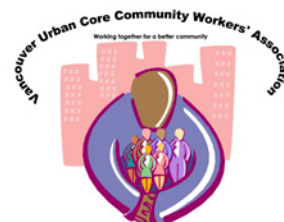
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Learning Exchange



This program is funded by the Government of Canada
and the Province of British Columbia.



metro vancouver






MakeWay Charitable Society, our Shared Platform

Binners' Project joined the shared platform in 2015, which provides operational supports, governance, and charitable expertise for changemakers. The shared platform enables more time and money to go towards achieving greater impact. MakeWay is a national charity that builds partnerships and solutions to help nature and communities thrive together.

Don't wait until our next report for an update!

Join us on social media or our low-traffic email list to keep up with our activities year-round:

binnersproject.org/signup

-  facebook.com/binnersproject
-  @binners_project
-  twitter.com/binners_project
-  linkedin.com/company/binnersproject



A project of

MakeWay