



*Changing
Lives*



*Impacting
Communities*



*For over
58 years*

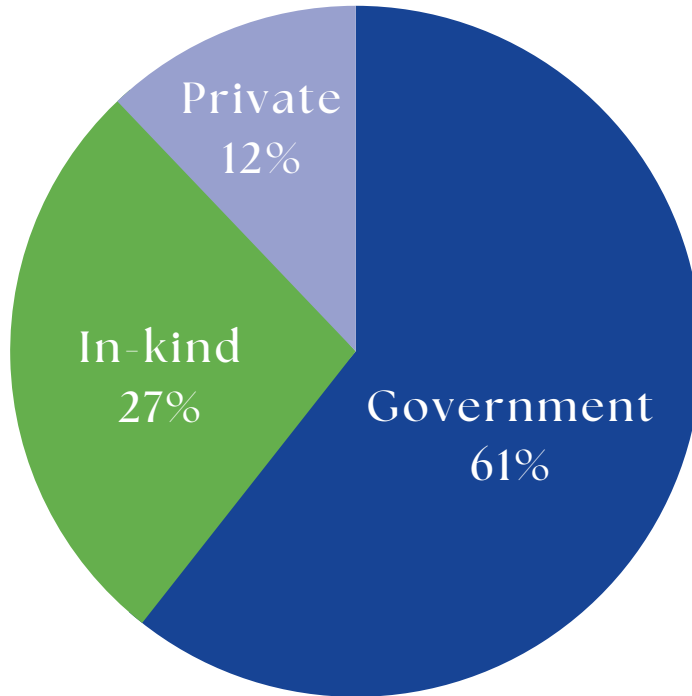


Bucks County Opportunity Council

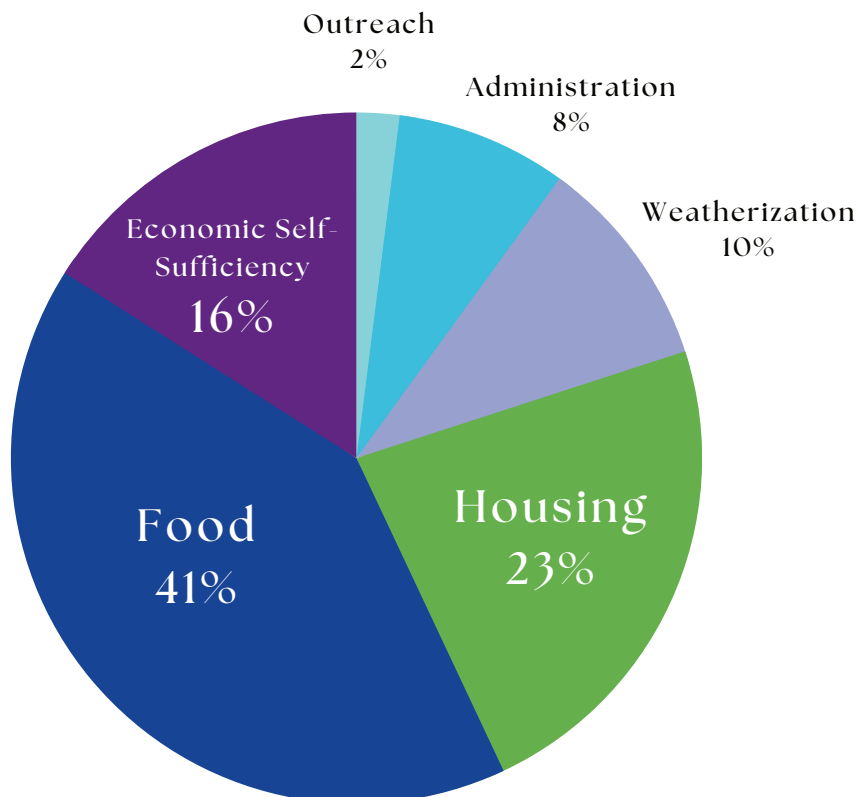
2022-2023
Annual
Report

2022-2023 Financials Summary

Revenue- \$13,528,562



Expenses-\$13,434,929



A message from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear BCOC Friends,

I am delighted to present the 2022-2023 Annual Report for the Bucks County Opportunity Council, a testament to our unwavering commitment to our mission and the incredible impact we have made in the past year.

As we reflect on the past year, we are humbled by the support and dedication of our donors, volunteers, staff, and the communities we serve. Your collective effort has allowed us to achieve remarkable milestones and continue our journey toward a better tomorrow.

Our mission is to reduce poverty and partner with the community to promote economic self-sufficiency, and at BCOC, our mission remains at the heart of all we do. Throughout the year, we stayed steadfast in our pursuit of this mission, working tirelessly to effect positive change in our community.

We understand the importance of fiscal responsibility. Here is a brief overview of our financial performance during the past year:

- Total Revenue: \$13,528,562
- Total Expenses: \$13,434,929
- Net Assets: \$3,894,540

We are proud to report that BCOC remains financially stable, ensuring that your generous donations are used effectively to support our programs and initiatives.

In FY23, we made significant progress in our core programs, such as Food, Housing, Weatherization, and Economic Self-Sufficiency. Our dedicated team and the unfaltering support of our stakeholders allowed us to achieve the following:

- 2,932,815 pounds of food distributed to 12,704 households in Bucks County
- 463 households were prevented from being evicted
- 117 households moved out of homelessness
- 348 households received home energy services and crisis heat response
- 12 families achieved economic self-sufficiency

While every program and service BCOC provides is impactful for the community, I want to highlight our work in helping families achieve economic self-sufficiency, as it continues to be a proven method to ending generational poverty. This year's graduating cohort increased their income by 244%, giving up government subsidies of food assistance, housing vouchers, and cash assistance. They gained the education and training necessary to increase their income to a family-sustaining wage.

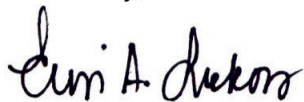
This year we have expanded the Economic Self-Sufficiency program to include Coaches on Campus, a collaboration with Bucks County Community College and I could not be prouder of this partnership. Helping students achieve their educational goals by connecting them with necessary resources is an honor and privilege. We have helped 52 students in our first year, and as we continue to expand, it is my hope that we will help hundreds more in the coming year.

None of our achievements would be possible without the support of our dedicated donors, volunteers, partners, and staff. We want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your commitment to our cause. You are the lifeblood of our organization, and your support has made a profound difference in the lives of those we serve.

As we move forward into the future, we are excited about the potential opportunities that lie ahead. We remain committed to our mission and look forward to making an even greater impact in the coming year.

Thank you for being an essential part of the BCOC family. Together, we will continue to inspire change, bring hope, and create a better community for all.

Sincerely,



MATCHED SAVINGS PROGRAM



Allison, a recent ES graduate, was able to reach her goal in just six months!

The Matched Savings Program provides a **\$1-to-\$1** match for low-income savers affiliated with the BCOC's Economic Self-Sufficiency(ES) Program. The primary objective is to develop strong saving habits in participants, and to establish savings goals within each saver's unique goal plan to achieve permanent economic self-sufficiency. Goals tend to include investments in housing, education, and transportation.

In 2023, **Penn Community Bank** partnered with BCOC to streamline this program and make it easier for clients to participate. Since this partnership began, **12** clients have opened accounts and are actively saving towards their goal. **Four** clients reached their goal of saving **\$1,000**. BCOC then matched their goal for a total of **\$2,000**.



HEALTHY FAMILY INITIATIVE

When families do not have sufficient resources to meet basic needs, they forgo extracurricular activities such as school trips, pool memberships, swimming lessons, amusement parks, bikes, and summer camps.



BCOC recognizes that a small amount of assistance can have life-changing effects on families, which is why we started the Healthy Family Initiative in the summer of 2022. With support from **Foundations Community Partnership** and private donations, this initiative has promoted quality family time, allowed kids to participate in summer activities, strengthened relationships, and built community support networks. We know that children build social capital when participating in sports teams, bands, and other organized activities.

WHEELZ2WORK PROGRAM

Wheelz2Work is operated by BCOC, in partnership with **Bucks County Community College**, **The Gene and Marlene Epstein Humanitarian Fund**, and with generous support from **Univest Financial** and private donors.

Vehicles that are donated to BCOC are then given to low-income families who need safe, reliable private transportation. BCOC works with local mechanics like **BBack Car Care** in Doylestown to ensure the vehicles are safe and pass inspection.

From 2022-2023, **14** cars were given to families in the ES Program.



2023 ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY GRADUATION



This year's celebration honored **12** amazing graduates, bringing the program's new total to **1,073** people in **385** households.

The 2023 class began the program with an average income of **\$15,806**. By the time they graduated, their income increased on average by **\$38,516** to **\$54,322**. The key to success has been acquiring the additional education and training necessary to earn a living wage.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR ES?

BCOC received **\$1 million** in one-time Congressional-directed community project funding to expand the ES program. This expansion project will allow us to add **two** new positions to support our program and increase the number of clients able to enroll by **50**, making the new total **175**.

BCOC is the lead food agency for Bucks County. We provide public and private donated food to over **70** food pantries and distribution sites throughout Bucks County. In fiscal year 2022-2023, BCOC distributed over **2.9 million pounds** of food to over **70,000** people.

A long-time supporter of our fight against hunger is **Wegmans** of Warrington. This year they provided **272,877** meals to our community members, making them a champion and leaders in ending hunger for good.

SENIOR CONNECT

Senior Connect, a program created by **Bucks County's Area Agency on Aging (AAA)**, is a new program for BCOC this year that bridges the technology gap for senior citizens who also receive a Pennsylvania Senior Food Box. This program helps seniors gain access to the internet and find local resources that fit their needs.



SCHOOL PRODUCE PROGRAM

In 2021 BCOC, guided by the Social Determinants of Health, piloted a school produce program within the **Central Bucks, Centennial, and Bristol Township School Districts**. BCOC delivers nutritious food on a regular basis to the schools. During the last year, the school produce program has grown to help **800** households on a monthly basis, an increase of **500** from the previous year.

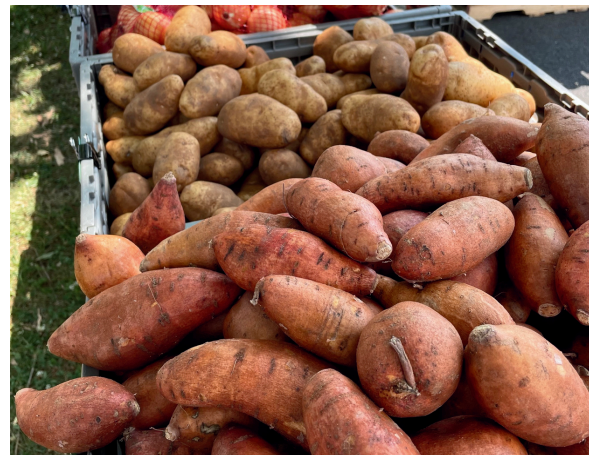


FRESH CONNECT

In collaboration with **Philabundance**, **Rolling Harvest Food Rescue**, **St. Mary Medical Center**, and with generous funding from **United Way of Bucks County**, Fresh Connect Bucks County is a free farmers market offering fresh, healthy food for our neighbors in Bucks County.

The distribution returns to the same locations on the same day at the same time each week. In 2022, we added a 4th, year-round Fresh Connect location in the county, **Quakertown Memorial Park**. Most distributions have returned to a walk-through, choice model after the conclusion of the pandemic protocols.

This program wouldn't be successful without our community partners. In 2022-2023, **Carversville Farm Foundation** donated over **\$100,000** worth of fresh organic produce to Fresh Connect. **Delaware Valley University** also supplied over **\$84,000** worth of produce to help feed families dealing with food insecurity.



Housing is a basic human need and is a critical piece for individuals striving to reach self-sufficiency. Individuals without housing can't focus on long-term goals when they're not sure where they will be sleeping that night, or if their kids will be warm enough. To make housing a reality for those individuals, BCOC has expanded multiple programs to create a more comprehensive approach to our housing services.

This past year BCOC helped move **117** people out of homelessness and kept **463** people from becoming homeless with eviction prevention services.



PATHWAYS TO HOUSING PROGRAM

In our first year operating the Pathways to Housing program (Pathways), a partnership with Bucks County Children & Youth, we have graduated **two** families to permanent housing, and **three** more are progressing toward that goal. Pathways provides intensive case management and short-term housing to families with children who are homeless. BCOC staff assist families in acquiring the skills necessary to be able to secure and sustain stable, permanent housing, and prevent placement of children into out-of-home care. BCOC recently purchased a **second home** to be used for additional family housing for the Pathways program.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR RE-ENTRY POPULATION (HORP) PROGRAM

The HORP program is a collaboration between BCOC, **Family Service Association of Bucks County**, and **Bucks County Adult Probation**, providing housing, treatment, and supportive services to individuals re-entering back into the community. Since its inception, the program has successfully helped **nine** people find safe housing.



The Weatherization Assistance Program continues to expand over the last year with additional services, increased staffing, and new program funding.

New programs included **Clean & Tune**, a preventative service that offers routine maintenance for heating and cooling systems to preserve equipment. The **Cooling Program** offers portable A/C units and services on older systems to individuals who have received LIHEAP assistance. The **Readiness Program** helps residents get their property ready for Weatherization assistance.

All programs work to reduce energy costs and consumption, and keep families comfortable in their homes.

In 2022-23, the Weatherization team served **348** households. This number is up **43%** compared to the previous year. On average, those who participate in the Weatherization programs save **\$400** annually.



WEATHERIZATION

Our volunteers always show up to lend a helping hand and are such a valuable asset in our work. We are so grateful to have had over **1,709** volunteers throughout the last year putting in over **109,478** hours of service. Without them, BCOC could not have such a wide reach to help the Bucks County community.



BCOC volunteers assist with passing out food at Fresh Connect in all weather conditions, packaging food delivery boxes at the HELP Center, delivering food to local residents and food pantries, harvesting produce, preparing tax returns and rebates, and representing BCOC at community events.

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

BCOC's tax preparation assistance, VITA, helps to ensure that working families and individuals keep more of what they earn, so they can provide for their families, buy groceries, cover childcare costs, transportation expenses, and other needs. Keeping money in their pockets means more money for our local economy.

Last year, **45** IRS-certified volunteer tax preparers completed **1,372** income tax returns, rent and property tax rebates; this resulted in **\$2,404,303** in refunds, credits, and saved fees for Bucks County residents.

We're excited to expand our services in partnership with the **Bucks County Community College** in the coming year, providing additional free tax preparation, as well as real-life tax experience for accounting students. This program is made possible through a grant from the IRS, which increased its funding by **50%** to BCOC to allow for expanded services.



"The general atmosphere (at the VITA site) was most welcoming, and Rich kept me informed every step of the way as he most diligently worked on my return. I feel I could not have been in better hands, for sure. Thank you so very much for all the wonderful help I received at that appointment, and be sure to look for me next year. Kudos to you and the staff!!"

-Judy, VITA participant

The support of the community makes a profound difference in our mission. Year after year, **individuals**, **families**, **businesses**, and **organizations** embody the spirit of Community Action, through service and financial support. From gift cards to cars, from backpacks and school supplies to holiday meals, helping our low-income neighbors is a priority here in Bucks County. Each contribution is not only a material gift but demonstrates that our community cares. The families who receive these gifts express to our staff how grateful they are, and how they plan to 'pay it forward' when they have the means to do so.

Our Economic Self Sufficiency program is specific and individualized for each participant and requires us to creatively meet their needs as they work toward their individual goals. While the Opportunity Council is the recipient of numerous federal, state, and local funds, it is the financial support of private donations from **individuals**, **corporations**, and **foundations** that allows us to provide the specific support needed. As a designated Community Action Agency, the Opportunity Council leverages federal funding to address the root causes of poverty in our community. The diverse range of funding sources amplifies our capacity to uplift and empower. Your generous monthly and annual gifts effectively help low-income families break the cycle of poverty, and impact real families. Gifts help us meet our current goals and reach further into the future, impacting multiple generations of Bucks County families.



THANK YOU

COACHES ON CAMPUS



BCOC has hired a full-time staff member dedicated to providing services to students and growing the Coaches on Campus program.

In partnership with **Bucks County Community College**, BCOC coaches have become a part of the student services division of the college to offer direct support to students. BCOC knows that the key to success is acquiring the additional education and training necessary to earn a living wage, and are proud to support students as they make their way toward self-sufficiency.

Since Coaches on Campus began in May of 2022, the program has been able to provide case management to **52** Bucks County Community College students. Support that has been offered ranges from helping with technology, to providing more options for class schedules that fit their lifestyle, to helping with transportation so students are able to make it to their classes and stay on track.

HEALTHY EATING AND LIVING PARTNERSHIP (HELP) CENTER

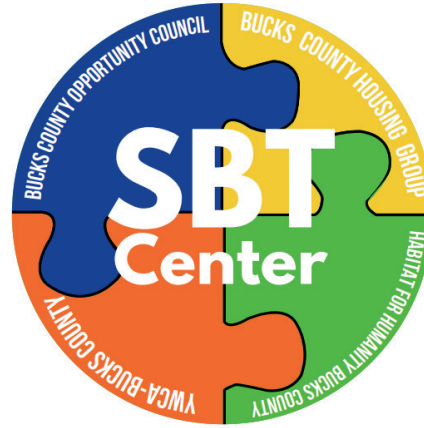
The HELP Center – a Healthy Eating and Living Partnership – is a collaboration between three nonprofit agencies: Bucks County Opportunity Council, **St. Mary Medical Center**, and **United Way of Bucks County** with generous support from **Penn Community Bank**.

The HELP Center is our Lower Bucks warehouse that houses both perishable and non-perishable food. From the HELP Center, BCOC distributes food to **56** food pantries and through our home delivery program. BCOC has established an on-site pantry area to provide food directly to those who are in need. On average, BCOC will see **275** walk-ins to the HELP Center for food assistance monthly.



SERVING BUCKS TOGETHER (SBT) CENTER

The Serving Bucks Together (SBT) Center is a central location for Central Bucks County residents to access emergency assistance with rent and utilities, homeownership counseling, financial literacy, and long-term self-sufficiency services including education and employment planning by any of the four partnering organizations: BCOC, **Habitat for Humanity Bucks County**, **YWCA Bucks County**, and **Bucks County Housing Group**.



Serving Bucks Together

COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR

This past year BCOC, **YWCA**, and the **Bucks County Housing Group** held a fundraiser to support the work provided at the SBT Center. **Coldest Night of the Year** was a walk through Doylestown on a bitter February evening to bring awareness to the conditions that those experiencing homelessness and food insecurity face throughout the winter months. We raised **\$25,000**! The next CNOY walk will be on February 24, 2024, and we hope to double our impact.



BCOC Staff Departments



Fiscal & Admin



Food



Client Services



Development &
Outreach



Weatherization

Board of Directors

Tobias Bruhn
Laura Burdette
Lara Christiano
Emily Citron
James Dacey
Deborah Downey
Kimberly Everett

Shane Fitzgerald
Jacob Iampietro
Christina Kahmar
Kelley M. Keeling
Christopher Mahoney, Esquire
Jeffrey J. Martinides
Tim McCann, Esquire

Andrew Moser
Kaleena Polachek
Fred Poritsky
Paul Rottkamp
Kerry Shepherd
Wanda Wheeler
Danielle Wittig

2022-2023 Impact Report

HOUSING

463
Households
avoided eviction

117
Families moved out of
homelessness

ECONOMIC SELF- SUFFICIENCY

12
Graduates

\$38,516
Graduate class increased income
(averaged)

FOOD

2.9 million
Pounds of food
distributed

75,280
Visits made
to pantries

WEATHERIZATION

348
Homes that
received assistance

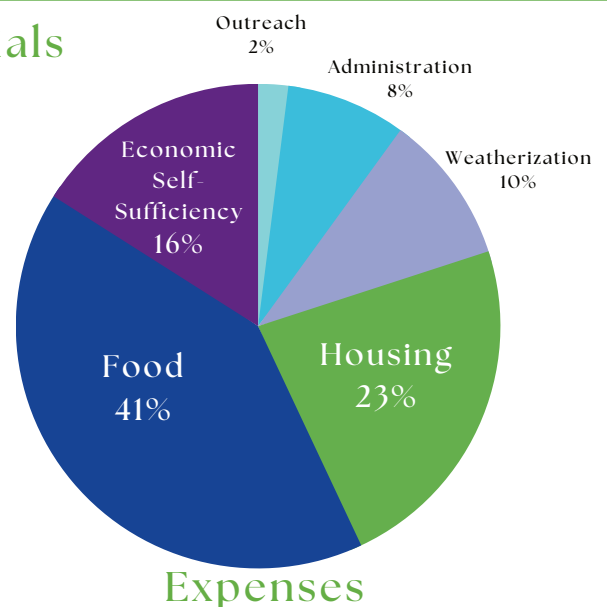
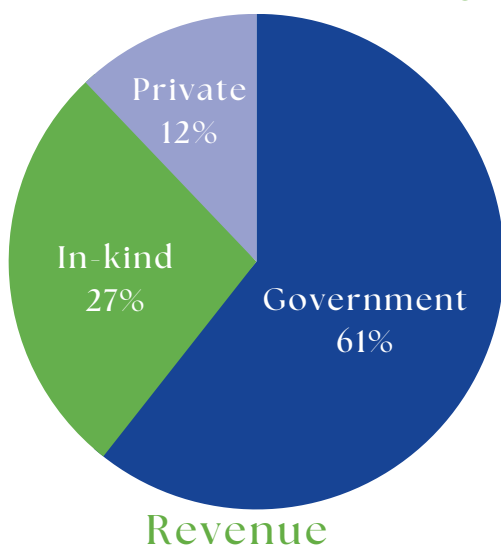
\$400
Saved annually by
participants (averaged)

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE

1,372
Income tax returns, rent,
and property tax rebates

\$2.4 million
Saved in returns, credits, and fees for
Bucks County residents, impacting our
local economy

2022-2023 Financials





Scan the QR code to get involved & stay
connected with BCOC.



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Website:
bcoc.org