

# WECAN Food Basket Society Annual Report to Members

## 2023/2024

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# Chair's Message: Suraya Hudson, B.A., MSc.

Dear WECAN Community,

As Chair of WECAN Food Basket Society's Board, I am humbled to address you in reflection of the accomplishments that we have made over the past year. In the world of food, where sustenance meets community, our organization's food distribution initiatives have supported and nourished countless individuals and families. We continue to witness the profound impact that access to nutritious food can have on the lives of those in need. I am so proud of the work of WECAN's staff, board and volunteers that authentically supports our community in a meaningful way. I'd love to share some highlights from the year...

## Our Reach

Last year, almost 2800 individuals in households were served. The genuine need for this program becomes even more evident if you look deeper at the demographics of people who use the program.

Of the households served,

315 had seniors

424 had preschoolers

572 had children (non-preschoolers)

30 were adults living alone

18 were seniors living alone

We are removing barriers to equitable access to food by creating new avenues to affordable and nutritious food to our community members who need it.

## Strategic Planning Revamp

This year, our incredible team came together to re-think WECAN's Strategic Plan. We are grateful for Peter Faid and Mavis Snider who facilitated our creative process through the Alberta Community Support Network. We are so lucky to have such a broad diversity of experiences, skills, and perspectives among our board and staff and were able to easily identify five clear strategic goals for our organization to pursue in the coming years. They are as follows:

- Build a more resilient Board of Directors by strengthening board recruitment, training, and mentorship.
- Diversify & sustain our funding sources and strengthen our relationship with our suppliers.
- Grow our membership and our network of community-based depots by continuing to focus on outreach activities and community awareness.
- Explore opportunities for extending CiviCRM technology for operational improvements with payment and food distribution and other related board activities.
- Establish WECAN as a community educator on the importance of food security as a systemic issue.

By working through these processes internally, we are able to better support our beautiful community. The board has formally accepted this plan, and the actionable items have been delegated to the appropriate committees to set reasonable priorities for deadlines. I am confident that this will be put into action this year.



### Outreach and Presence in the Community

WECAN hired a part-time Outreach Coordinator, Patricia, who has enabled the organization to increase outreach by increasing community engagement; increasing awareness of WECAN; and WECAN's connection with relevant communities and agencies. I believe that community engagement is crucial for the success and sustainability of any nonprofit organization, especially one focused on food-related initiatives.

We had the opportunity to represent WECAN at Alberta Ave Night Market (2023), Hulaballoo Family Festival hosted by North Central Edmonton Family Resource Network (2023), Centre for Community Inclusion Block Party hosted by ABC Headstart, Community Options and WSAF (2023), Love Local Event by JFC (2023), Health's Dirty Little Secrets by JFC (2023), Volunteer Fair by Just Serve Org (2024), and Edmonton Volunteer Fair by EVCO (2024). We also had opportunities to give presentations to the youth clients of Life Skills at Catholic Social Services, to the social workers at Human Prospect Services to the board members of the Rotary Gateway and many more. We worked to make sure WECAN is on the map by participating in broader community discussion with other organizations in our local food landscape.

Sharing what we do with the community has gained visibility on our programming, recruits volunteers, members and donors and forces us to think about and reflect on broader systemic concerns such as barriers to access to food, social justice, food security, poverty and many other relevant and important issues that our communities try to tackle every single day.

### New Website

We are so excited to share with you that our new website will be live VERY SOON. Our incredible Project Manager Joshua, with the support of our communication Committee, has spent countless hours working on a website that is more intuitive, easier to navigate and certainly looks absolutely beautiful. A sincere thank you to everyone who contributed to this major project this year. We are all so motivated by our cause, and now our website reflects our enthusiasm to do the work that we do.

### Carnival Fundraiser Event

This year, WECAN put on our first carnival-style fundraising event that included games for kids, a raffle with amazing prizes and the presence of about 25 local vendors selling their beautiful work. Being the first event of its kind, this was a great learning opportunity for our team. We are grateful to have come together with the community to have a little bit of fun in the sun, to promote our programming and to try to raise some funds for our cause.

## Casino

Every two years, WECAN is eligible to host a casino fundraiser over the course of two days through the Charitable Gaming Program (AGLC). Although we will not know how many funds WECAN was able to gain until the end of the quarter (later this summer), I can say that there was great attendance as it was an Oilers game night! I'd like to give a special thanks to all the WECAN members as well as their supportive friends and family members that came to volunteer. The shifts are long and late - your time is so appreciated.

I am immensely proud of our team, whose dedication and passion have been the driving force behind our success. To the depot coordinators, drivers, volunteers, staff and our incredible volunteer board of directors - THANK YOU for working tirelessly to support WECAN's goals.

## Closing

As we look ahead to the future, let us do so with optimism and determination. There is still much work to be done, but with your continued support, I am confident that we will continue to make a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve.

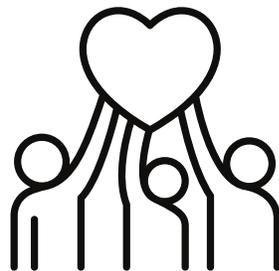
Remember, there is SO much power in knowledge sharing to empower individuals who can then transform communities. Listen to each other, share what you know, be intentional in your actions, never lose sight of the big picture and keep fighting the good fight. You are all inspiring.

In Community,

*Suraya*

**Joshua  
Topliffe**  
(staff)

**Mariam  
Jamaly**  
(staff)



**Our Team**

**Suraya  
Hudson**  
*Chair*

**Christine  
McVea**  
*Vice-chair  
Fundraising Chair  
Human Resources*

**Raheela  
Ghaznavi**  
*Treasurer,  
Finance & Audit*

**Madi  
Corry**  
*Secretary,  
Human Resources Chair,  
Fundraising*

**Patricia  
Divinia**  
(staff)

**Mohammed  
Abu Steit**  
*Director  
Communications  
Human Resources*

**Jessica  
Odyjewski**  
*Director  
Communications*

**Moush  
John**  
*Director,  
Communications  
Chair*

**Dawn  
Arnold**  
*Director  
Board Governance Chair*

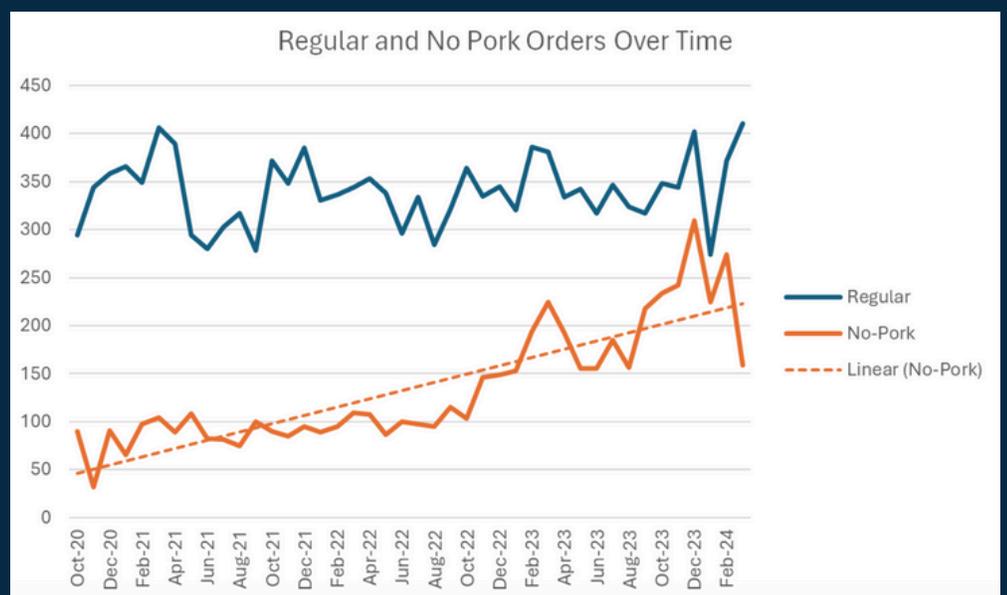
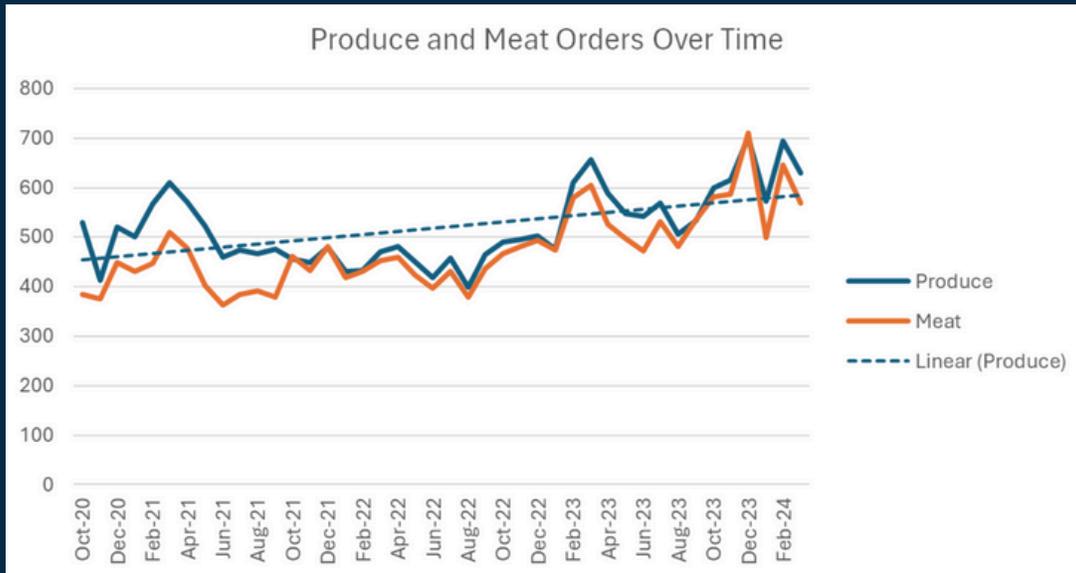
**Keith  
Kasha**  
*Director  
Board Governance  
Fundraising*

**Lorajoy Tira-  
Dimangundayao**  
*Director  
Board Governance*

# Program Highlights: Joshua Topliffe

## Orders

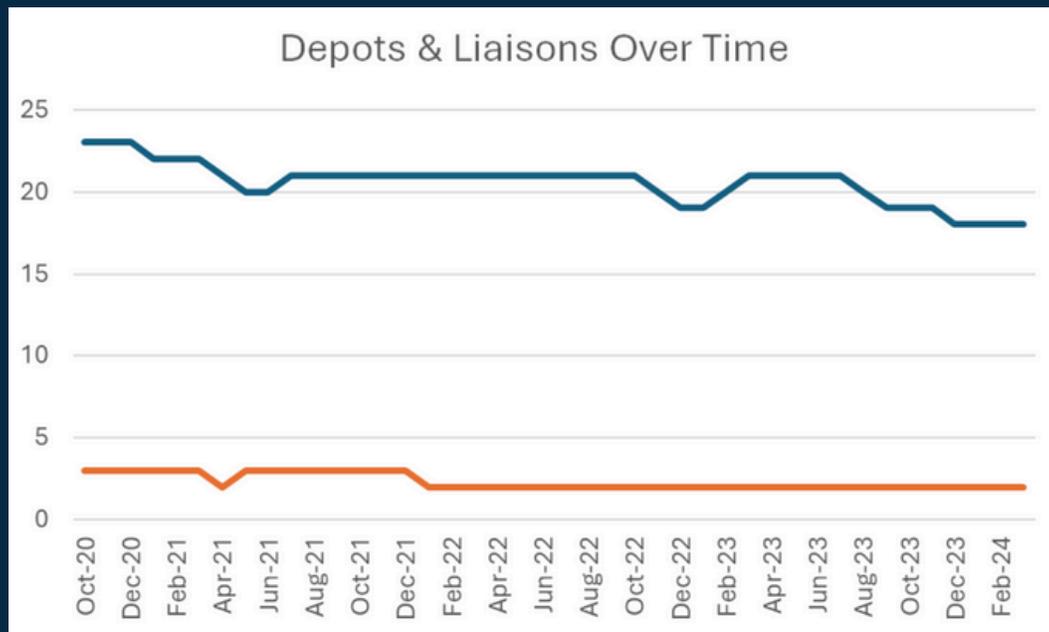
- The average order numbers throughout the year were 591 produce and 552 meat and continue to trend upward.
- No Pork orders have been continuing to trend upward substantially.



# Program Highlights Continued

## Depots and Liaisons

- 18 depots and 2 liaisons that are stable and growing.
- 1 new depot was very close to launching after a trial run of 6 months as a satellite depot (Concordia) but they experienced funding cuts by their Board of Governors that prevented opening. Abbottsfield depot closed due to Alberta Government altering requirements for funding use and reporting.
- 2 depots are scheduled to open in the next 4 months, 1 in Prince Rupert and 1 re-opening in Beverly.
- Trained 2 casual staff at the warehouse and recruited and placed 5 volunteers.



## Supply Chain Challenges

- The major issue we continue to face is supply chain unreliability. Produce quantity and quality has been unreliable causing complications for warehouse staff and depot coordinators. Our supplier is doing what they can, but this seems to be a problem with no permanent solution. The supply chain is not nearly as bad as what we experienced early in the pandemic but it has yet to return to the consistency before the pandemic.

## Memberships

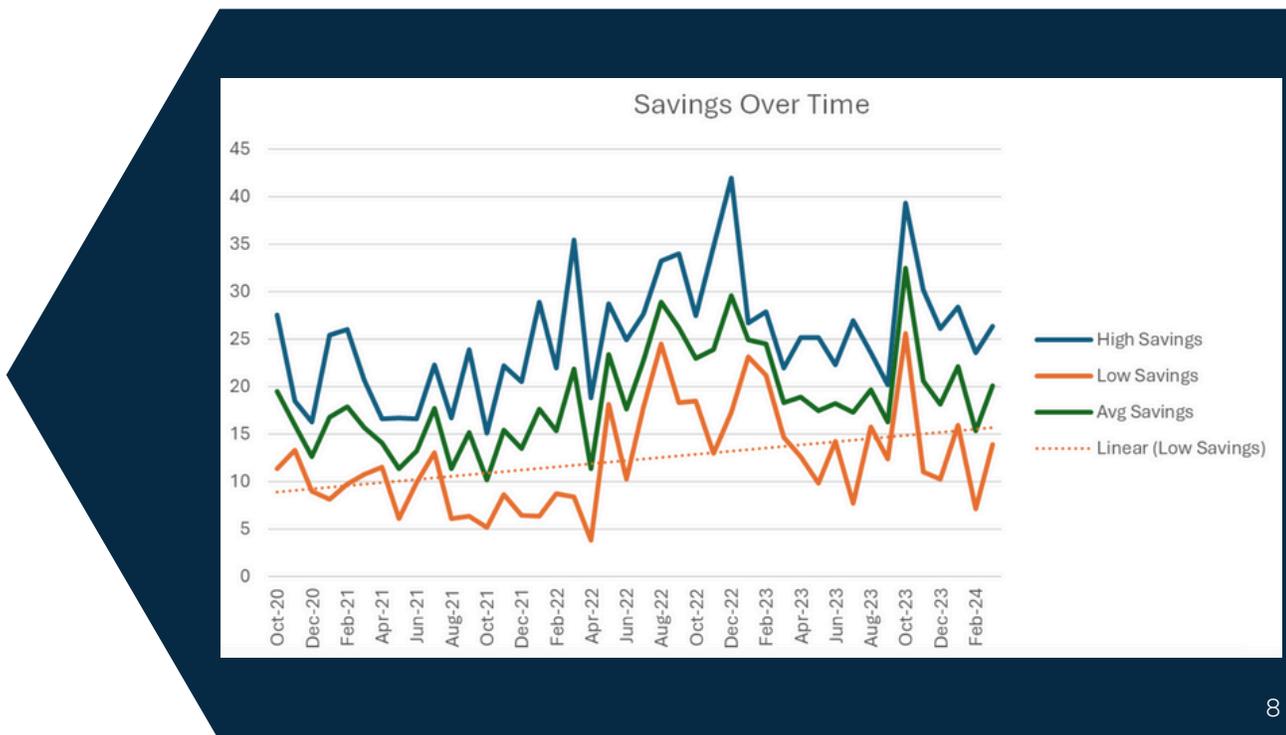
- The average memberships registrations per month was 143.5 with an annual total of 1722 continuing the overall increase over time.
- This is substantially more than are ordering on a regular basis at 535 members using their memberships this year. The reason for this is unknown based on current data. It is my speculation that it is due to a mix of factors that include new members not understanding how to use their membership or trying in the program, but it doesn't fit their needs and folks wanting to support the organization financially. Further investigation is needed.

# Program Highlights Continued



## Savings

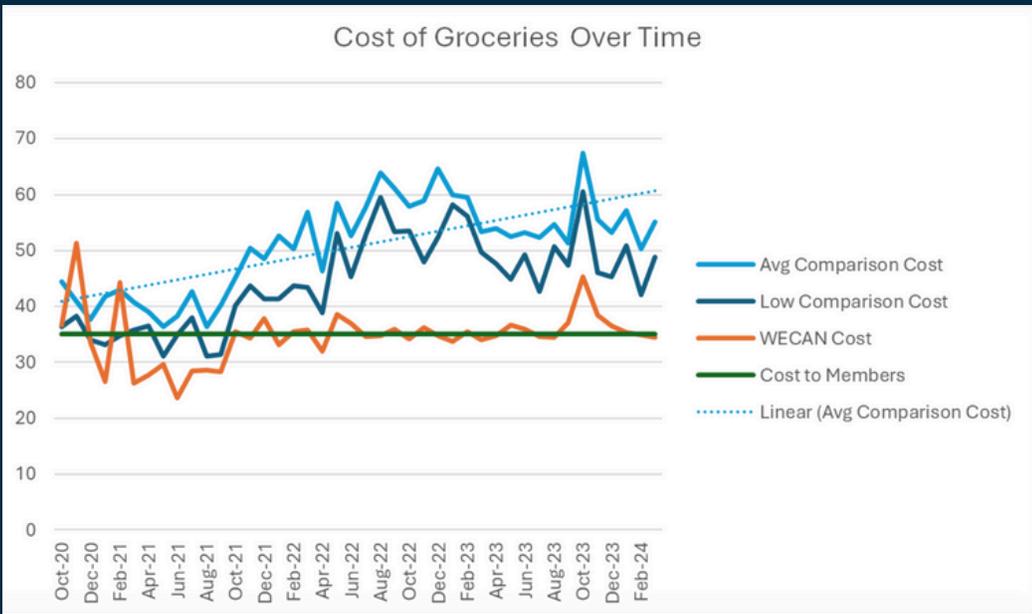
- Average savings to a member was between \$11.35 (low price comparison) and \$19.45 (average price comparison) per month purchasing 1 meat and 1 produce order.
- Total savings to a member was between \$156.14 (low price comparison) and \$235.60 (average price comparison) for the year purchasing 1 meat and 1 produce order monthly.
- Savings on meat has been a challenge since our supplier lost their meat manager over a year ago and whom they struggled to replace. They completed training of a new meat manager in May. June is the first month since he has fully taken over the job and we have seen prices come down.



# Program Highlights Continued

## Value

- Average savings was about 29.4% relative to the lowest store on the price comparison purchasing 1 meat and 1 produce.
- The average weight of meat orders was 2.6 kilograms, and the average count of produce items per order was 13.5.
- Prices continue to soar but the value of the order has remained consistent.



# Committee Activities

## Board Governance

The WECAN Board Governance Committee met, usually monthly, to address scheduled and arising items. During 2023-2024 the committee reviewed and/or acted upon the following:

- Governance Committee Annual Objectives for 2023
- All WECAN committees' Terms of Reference
- Created a digital Board Member Handbook Board Member Orientation Checklist
- WECAN Strategic Planning Session
- WECAN Policies and Procedures
- Board Evaluation Survey was conducted in February

## Communications

This past year Comms Committee of WECAN was very fortunate to have our staff, Patricia, contribute to WECAN social media presence and digital voice across the board. This has led to an increased engagement and we are happy to see where the digital platforms of WECAN are at the moment. Also, in the works has been the WECAN website, which we are happy to announce is almost complete. Besides some back end work to have the payment and some plugins working, we will be able to launch the new website anytime now. This has been one of the major projects that the committee has been invested in the past few weeks and months. Keeping the brand and WECAN identity same as before, the committee worked closely with program manager Josh and were able to create a platform, which will play a crucial role in WECAN's journey as the organization grows and evolves.

## Fundraising

The fundraising committee plans two years ahead to support operational funding. For example, our CIP grants provides funding for two years and require the agency to self fund for the third year before another application can be made. As well, most grants require financial reporting and detailed documentation to qualify. Significant grants that WECAN applied for and received this fiscal year included the provincial Community Investment Program (CIP), Community Investment Operating Grant (COIG), and a grant from the Stollery Charitable Foundation. Another significant funding source is the AGLC casino community charities program, which WECAN volunteers participated in this May. This funding supports specific staffing and office costs, and that funding should be received in late September. WECAN also received several large contributions from individual donors this year, one of which allowed us to do an especially large food order in November. We encourage donations and provide a donation option on our website. We also receive a small benefit from CanadaHelps program. Our wholesale supplier, TGP, the Grocery People, also contributed to our Volunteer Appreciation Fund supporting our celebratory events: our 30 Anniversary BBQ, our November volunteer appreciation dinner and our AGM. These resources support the operations of WECAN to provide the monthly food order to our members through our community WECAN depots.

# Committee Activities

## Human Resources

This year, the Human Resources Committee completed our annual review of the HR policies and Terms of Reference, which is an annual project for us. As part of our strategic planning this year, Human Resources is evaluating how we can best support new board members during recruitment and onboarding, to feel as welcomed and empowered as possible. So far, we have created a comprehensive checklist of all the little tasks and projects that new board members can complete in their first few weeks or months after the AGM to be prepared for their role as a WECAN board director.

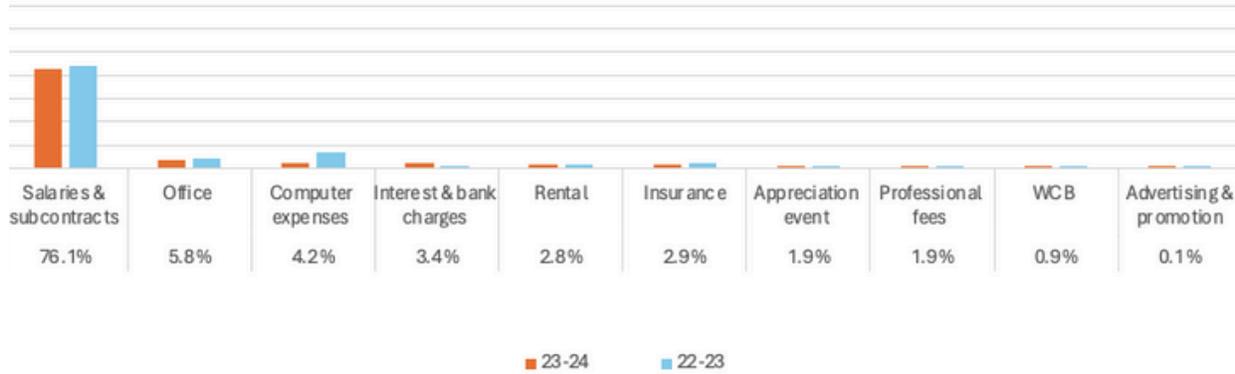
We have also just completed another recruitment season, bringing several new board members to complete our 2023-2024 team. Next we will be looking to hire summer staff to support the outreach and grant-writing work that is a crucial part of the continued growth and success of WECAN as an organization.

## Finances & Audit (Treasurer)

This winter, our outgoing treasurer, Chelsea, and our new treasurer, Raheela, worked together to make sure all of Chelsea's knowledge from several years with WECAN was available to Raheela. The treasurer plays a pivotal role in ensuring the financial integrity and accountability of WECAN. The Treasurer's primary function is to provide oversight of financial reporting, ensuring accuracy, transparency, and compliance with regulatory requirements and accounting standards. The Treasurer reviews financial statements, prepares budgets, and issues payments to employees, the CRA, WCB, and food suppliers on a monthly basis. Moreover, the Treasurer ensures internal controls are in place, safeguarding the organization's assets and mitigating financial risks by regularly examining financial records and adhering to best practices. The Treasurer closely monitors the organization's bank accounts to ensure that funds are used wisely and as intended, as well as to transfer any additional funds to higher interest-bearing accounts. The Treasurer also leads the organization's audit with external auditors, ensuring thorough and accurate audit processes. Additionally, the Treasurer serves as a liaison between the board, and team members for financial-related questions and queries, facilitating open communication and addressing any concerns related to financial matters.



## Expenses - 2023/2024 \$ 112,168



EXPENSES	23-24	22-23	Variance
76.1% Salaries & subcontracts	85,368	88,728	(3,360)
5.8% Office	6,463	8,047	(1,584)
4.2% Computer expenses	4,658	13,968	(9,310)
3.4% Interest & bank charges	3,827	203	3,624
2.8% Rental	3,131	3,265	(134)
2.9% Insurance	3,300	3,732	(432)
1.9% Appreciation event	2,181	1,466	715
1.9% Professional fees	2,101	2,048	53
0.9% WCB	1,031	1,451	(420)
0.1% Advertising & promotion	108	69	39
100% Cost of Sales	<b>112,168</b>	<b>122,977</b>	<b>(10,809)</b>

YEAR END - March 31, 2024	23-24	22-23	Variance
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	63,132.00	57,458	5,674
(Deficiency) Surplus of Receipts Over Expenses	174.00	5,674	(5,500)
100% Net Assets - End of Year	<b>63,306</b>	<b>63,132</b>	<b>174</b>



# More about WECAN:

Visit [wecanfood.com](http://wecanfood.com) for:

- WECAN Board member biographies
- More details on our strategic plan
- Our Mission, Vision, and Beliefs
- Interesting information about our service
- How to become a WECAN member
- The closest WECAN depot to you



The Grocery People



AGLC  
Choices Albertans can trust.



**WECAN**  
Food Basket  
Society

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