

**IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT IDEAS.
IT'S ABOUT MAKING
IDEAS HAPPEN.**



**COMMUNITY FUTURES
SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY**

ANNUAL REPORT

2023/2024

June 2024

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



This past year has been an extraordinary year at Community Futures South Georgian Bay. I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the accomplishments we have achieved together. This year marks my final year as Chair of the Board and member of the Executive Committee. I have thoroughly enjoyed the journey and working with our staff and volunteer Board members. I am continually inspired by your dedication, passion, and collaborative spirit. Your unwavering commitment to supporting our local businesses is the cornerstone of our success.

We experienced a record-breaking year for our organization. CFSGB provided close to \$2 million funding for small businesses in our communities and supported over 450 jobs. Our team also provided over 300 hours of business coaching, delivered on multiple community projects and continued to strengthen our entrepreneurship ecosystem. Our long-standing history speaks volumes. As we reach our 38th year in operation, we have disbursed close to \$30 million in loans and supported 3,859 jobs since inception. These efforts have spurred an additional \$70 million in investments, proving the remarkable impact of the program. Together, we have continually adapted our products and services to meet the evolving needs of our business community, ensuring they receive the resources necessary to thrive. We could not have achieved this without the support of

our amazing volunteer Board members and dedicated staff.

To our entrepreneurial community, I extend my deepest appreciation for your resilience and ingenuity. You consistently turn obstacles into opportunities and demonstrate remarkable adaptability and innovation. Your ability to pivot and embrace change is truly commendable. Your impact on your customers, employees, and the broader community is profound, and we are honored to support you on your journey.

As we transition our Board to new leadership this upcoming year, we renew our commitment to the values that guide us: passion, professionalism, perseverance, integrity, and an unwavering dedication to the communities we serve. We continue to look for opportunities to adapt to the needs of our local small businesses, expand our programs, deepen our impact, advocate for small businesses, and strengthen our community connections. Together, we will drive positive change and foster an environment where businesses can flourish.

On behalf of the entire Board, I extend my heartfelt thanks to our incredible teams, partners, and stakeholders who have been instrumental in our shared success.

Darryl Hindle, Board Chair
Community Futures South Georgian Bay
Owner, Quench Buggy





**COMMUNITY FUTURES
SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY**

38 YEARS OF COMMUNITY IMPACT



599

**DISBURSEMENTS
TOTALLING
\$29.7M**



3859

**JOB CREATED OR
MAINTAINED
THROUGH CFSGB
PROGRAMS**



\$74M

**IN FUNDS
LEVERAGED**

ABOUT US



Community Futures South Georgian Bay is a not-for-profit Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) sponsored by Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev). We are one of 61 CFDCs in Ontario and part of an amazing network of 267 offices operating across Canada.

We support 13 municipalities across 3 Counties – including Simcoe County, Grey County and Dufferin County. CFSGB was formed in 1985 and is celebrating 38 years of successes. Our mandate is to support local business, to develop and to diversify the local economy and help create vibrant business communities.

CFSGB is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Our Board members are experienced

professionals and/or entrepreneurs in the community and are passionate about community and business development.

Studies show that businesses that access loans through the Community Futures Program stay in business longer and grow faster than those who don't. This is because of the full wraparound support that is offered to entrepreneurs who access the services of a Community Futures office. We understand small business. As local champions of business and community, we live and work where you live and work, and know that rural communities thrive when small businesses are successful. When your business succeeds, so do we.

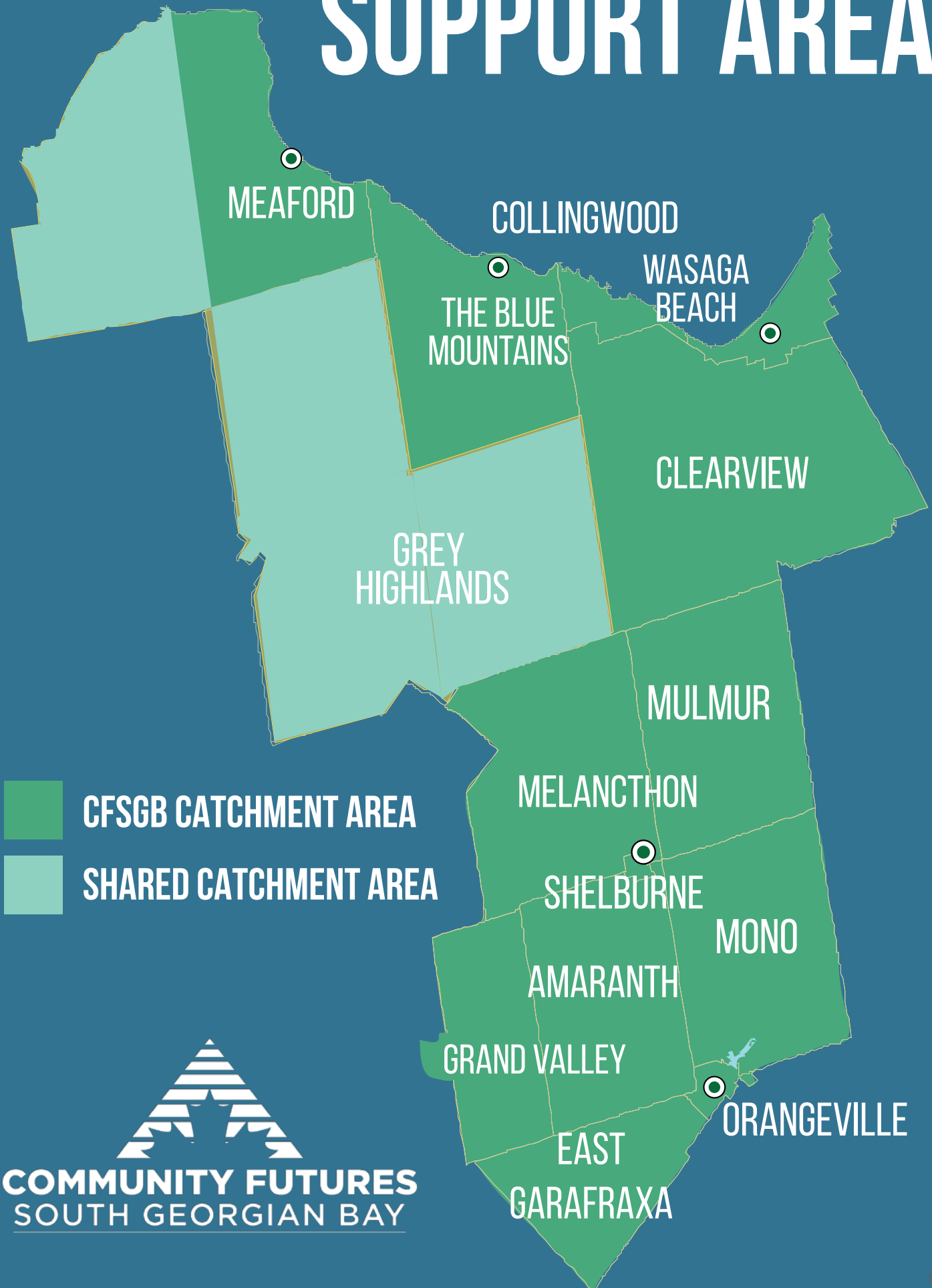
MISSION

Community Futures South Georgian Bay supports the growth, retention and expansion of businesses, thereby stimulating economic and community development.

VISION

Community Futures South Georgian Bay is recognized as an expert lender with capacity, knowledge, and resources to drive the growth and development of businesses. We are leaders in promoting collaboration and supporting innovation through investment in our communities and partners.

SUPPORT AREA



IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS



COMMUNITY FUTURES
SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY

2023/2024

\$1.96M IN FUNDS
PROVIDED

300 BUSINESS
CONSULTING SESSIONS

382 JOBS CREATED
OR MAINTAINED

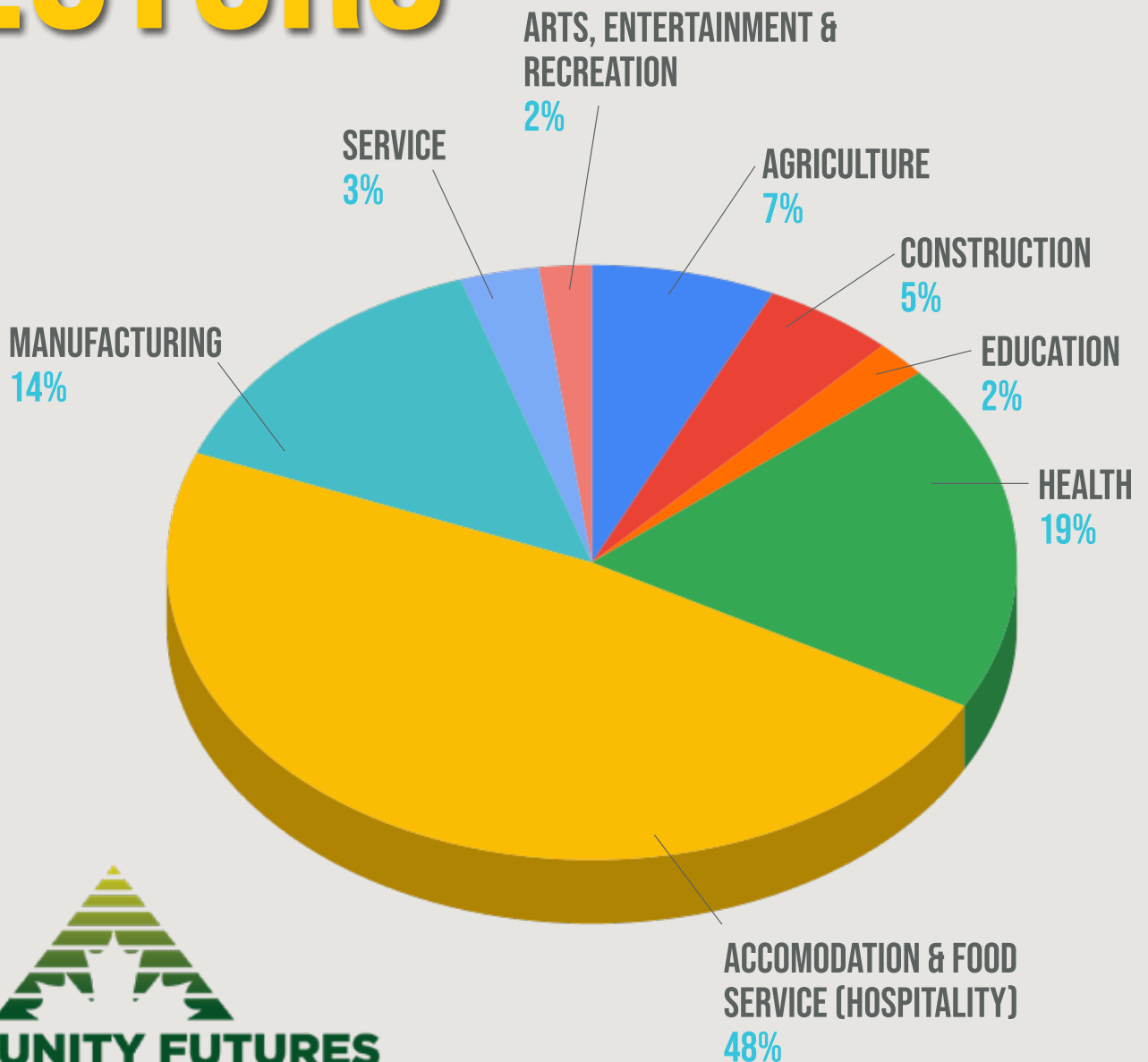
SINCE 2018

5022 INQUIRIES

89 WORKSHOPS

1564 CONSULTATIONS

WE SUPPORT A BROAD RANGE OF SECTORS



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS



In addition to working with entrepreneurs, we take a 'big picture view' of the health of the local businesses and the economy and we are drivers of regional innovation. We know that successful and sustainable businesses build strong communities, and that strong communities support successful and sustainable businesses.

We partner with many in the entrepreneurship ecosystem on projects that benefit entrepreneurs and make our communities a better place to live and do business. We also deliver a number of key projects aimed at supporting and growing small businesses in our region.

T³ACCELERATOR

T3 ACCELERATOR: CELEBRATING 5 YEARS OF SUCCESS!

Tourism businesses in BruceGreySimcoe can benefit from the specialized professional development program, the T3 Accelerator. This initiative, launched in 2019 by Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) and Community Futures South Georgian Bay (CFSGB), is celebrating five years of success. T3 provides businesses with knowledgeable coaching tailored to individual needs of the businesses and entrepreneurs, helping them define their goals, develop action plans, and grow.

The T3 Program offers business owners targeted coaching support in the following areas:

- Pivoting the Business
- Sales and Marketing
- Social Media Best Practices
- Human Resources and Workforce Development
- Financial Management
- Business Management
- Experience and Product Development

“The T3 Accelerator program provided us with mentors who could answer questions we had... guide us in a new direction and challenge us to think about our business differently. It provided us with a great opportunity to learn from others and grow our business.”

- Free Spirit Tours

Through the amazing support of coaches and program partners, the program continues to support tourism businesses in the region and look for opportunities to enhance training, education and resource sharing.

The T3 Accelerator program is a crucial resource for tourism businesses in BruceGreySimcoe. For more information, visit the [T3 Accelerator Program page](#).

40

PROGRAM
PARTNERS



600

HOURS OF
SUPPORT



40

PARTICIPATING
BUSINESSES





BIZLINK: AWARD WINNING PROGRAM FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Community Futures South Georgian Bay is proud to continue to offer the BizLink program – winner of the Award of Excellence for Community Economic Development at a recent Community Futures Ontario conference. The BizLink program supports business owners looking to transition their business to new ownership as well as sellers who are purchasing an existing business. BizLink provides access to tools, coaching, resources, and a network of experts to assist individuals throughout their succession plan, business purchase and ownership transition.

In partnership with three other Community Futures offices across Simcoe County, the program has supported over 1000 entrepreneurs with coaching, advice and training and assisted over 75 business transitions.

Business succession is particularly crucial for rural communities because it ensures the continuity and stability of local small businesses that are the backbone of the community. These businesses not only contribute economically, they are also the social and cultural pillars that contribute to the town's identity and quality of life. When a business has a solid

succession plan, it can smoothly transition to new ownership, preserving jobs, services, and local heritage. Successful succession also helps to retain young talent and entrepreneurial spirit within the community, fostering a resilient and vibrant local economy. By securing the future of local businesses through succession, our communities can maintain their unique character and economic diversity.

Find the right business for you. Match with the right buyer. Match with the right seller.





TECH COMPASS: GUIDING TOURISM BUSINESSES THROUGH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Community Futures South Georgian Bay has rebranded its successful Biz Tech Boost program to the Tech Compass program after a successful initial pilot. This program aims to assist tourism businesses in BruceGreySimcoe to navigate the complex digital landscape, provide essential tools and guidance to help them thrive in a competitive market.

Program Overview

The Tech Compass program begins with a comprehensive tech assessment to evaluate the specific technological needs of each business. Following this evaluation, participants receive customized recommendations and a detailed action plan. This personalized approach ensures each business can effectively implement the suggested tools and strategies.

Participants also gain access to a robust digital toolkit and extensive training resources, which are tailored to enhance various aspects of their operations, from marketing and customer engagement to operational efficiency. These resources enable businesses to save time, reduce costs, and improve overall performance.

Rebranding and Expansion

Previously known as Biz Tech Boost, the program has been rebranded to Tech Compass to better reflect its mission of guiding businesses through digital transformation. The rebranding follows a successful pilot that demonstrated significant improvements in business operations and digital adoption. The program has expanded its reach, now supporting a broader range of businesses and offering more comprehensive resources.

Next Steps and Future Plans

Community Futures South Georgian Bay plans to continue expansion of the Tech Compass program, aiming to support 70 businesses over the next two years. The program will also focus on building partnerships with local and regional organizations to provide ongoing support and resources.

By offering targeted recommendations and hands-on support, Tech Compass not only strengthens individual businesses but also contributes to the broader regional entrepreneurship ecosystem. This initiative underscores Community Futures South Georgian Bay's commitment to fostering innovation and supporting the growth and sustainability of local businesses.

The Tech Compass program is a cornerstone of Community Futures South Georgian Bay's efforts to drive regional economic development and ensure the success of the local tourism industry.



COMMUNITY FUTURES
SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY



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