



FOOD CO-OP  
INITIATIVE

New co-ops start here.

# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT





# Letter from the Board Chair

**Chair: Richard Dines**  
Engagement Consultant,  
Credit Union National  
Association

As we do every year, the board held a strategic retreat in Philadelphia. The board and staff spent two and half days in sessions of intensive planning and discussions about FCI's strategic direction for the upcoming year. We had the pleasure of meeting leaders and organizers of local food co-ops and we engaged in conversations about how FCI can better offer support to communities of color and rural communities.

We also said our final "until we see you again" to the best of the best cooperators, Marilyn Scholl. Her time on the board has been invaluable. She has instilled her wisdom, expertise and shared her cooperative vision for the future of FCI. Marilyn left the FCI board in a good place establishing strong governance practices such as an annual board survey and a commitment to recruiting more board members that represent the breadth of the food cooperative movement. We also celebrated Allan Gallant's transition to Board Member Emeritus. We are honored to have Allan remain an integral part of FCI's work.

As chair, my view is that the board strives to provide guidance to staff and define our strategic goals and direction. I believe we are achieving that and we couldn't have better partners than Stuart, Jacqueline, and Mychaela.

Looking ahead, our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion will be a central focus of our work. We are an organization dedicated to providing critical resources to communities forming democratically owned and controlled institutions that supply nutrition and basic needs, as well as developing local food systems. We want to make sure that every community has access, so we are undertaking extra efforts to ensure we are listening and serving.

In cooperation,  
Richard Dines



**Allan Gallant**  
Blooming Prairie  
Foundation



**Chris Clamp**  
Director, Center for  
Cooperatives and CED,  
Southern New Hampshire  
University



**Gerardo Espinoza**  
Executive Director,  
Local Enterprise  
Assistance Fund (LEAF)



**John Guerra**  
Business Development  
Director, National Co-op  
Grocers (NCG) Develop-  
ment Co-operative



**Leslie Mead**  
Executive Director,  
Cooperative Development  
Foundation (CDF)



**Sohnie Black**  
Fund For Democratic  
Communities (F4DC)



**Ray Williams**  
Operations Manager,  
Seward Community  
Co-op, Minneapolis, MN



**Jeanie Wells**  
Operations Manager  
and Organizational  
Consultant, Columinate



**Arnold Montgomery**  
Community Economic  
Development,  
Washington D.C.



**Vice Chair:  
Steve Cooke**  
General Manager,  
Friendly City Food Co-op,  
Harrisonburg, VA



**Treasurer:  
Brian Misenheimer**  
Senior Vice President,  
National Cooperative  
Bank

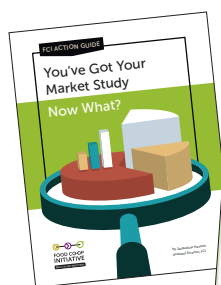


**Secretary:  
Darnell Adams**  
Firebrand Cooperative

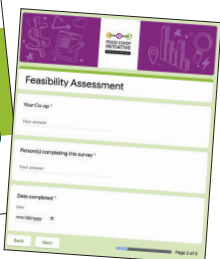


## Letter from the Executive Director

It is hard to talk about 2019 with the weight of 2020 heavy on our shoulders. The seeds of a pandemic and social reckoning were already growing and about to break out. Co-ops have a long history of welcoming the disenfranchised and providing opportunities when other institutions did not. Co-ops are once again proving that we make a difference.



New material has been added to our online library of free resources, including *You've Got Your Market Study, Now What?*, and the *Startup Co-op Feasibility Assessment Survey*, to help boards evaluate their plans and target areas that need work.



For the 10th year, we co-hosted the national Up & Coming conference with the Indiana Cooperative Development Center. We also helped plan and present at regional events in California, Minnesota, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. All together, over 650 food co-op organizers attended these training and networking events.

Our commitment to rural communities shapes all our work, but we are especially proud of the day-long workshop track FCI led for rural grocery developers working in smaller communities as part of the Small & Strong Conference. We collaborate with other development centers as we promote cooperative solutions for the many rural communities that are underserved or abandoned by privately-owned and chain stores.

We are incredibly grateful for our fine board of directors and our amazing sponsors and donors. A significant portion of our budget is funded through the USDA's Rural Cooperative Development Grants, and many other cooperative organizations have been regular funders since we began our work in 2005. And to all the many food co-ops and individuals that contribute what they can — *your help makes a difference*. Every gift feels like a personal thank you and it tells us we are doing something right. Thank you all.

Stuart Reid  
Executive Director



**"FCI continues to provide the Silverton Food Co-op board with valuable support and is always available when we have questions or concerns regarding our next steps. Their videos, documentation, and phone support have been invaluable to SFC. Providing opportunities for connections with other co-ops is monumental for us as we continue to move towards opening our doors. The FCI group feels like family and we cannot imagine opening our store without them."**

—Kelly Hilton  
President, Silverton Food Co-op

### New intensive programs launched in 2019:

**QuickStart:** 50+ startup food co-op board members/20 startups

**DeepDive, business dev. edition:** 10 students/9 startups

**DeepDive, ownership edition:** 12 students/9 startups

*Every session filled within days of announcing registration, and received rave reviews.*

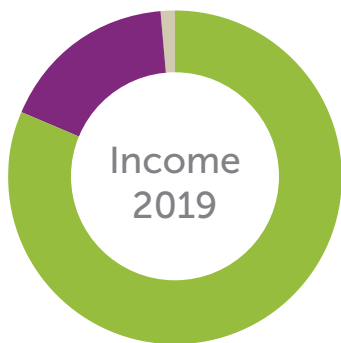
# Our Work by the Numbers

Local food purchased  
at startups every year:

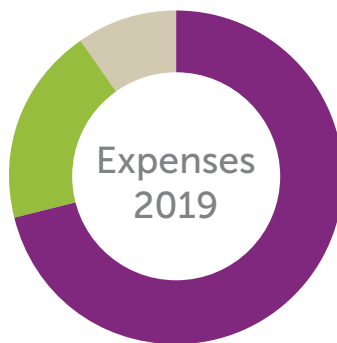
**\$116,000,000**

annual sales:

**\$528,000,000**



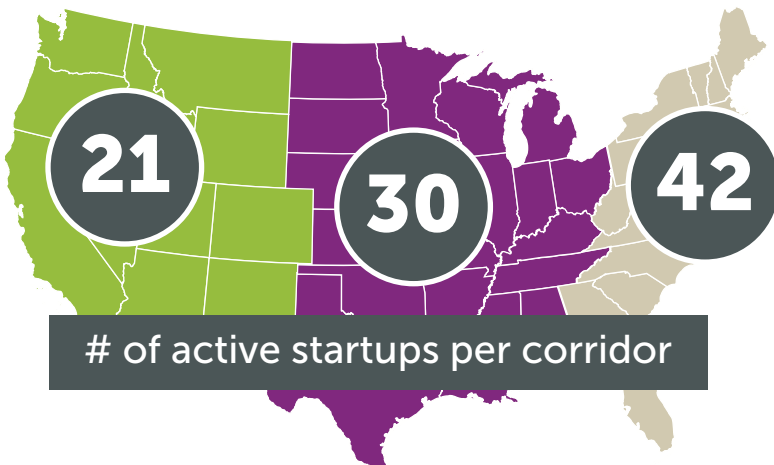
- Grants **81.6%**
- Contributions **17.2%**
- Other income **1.2%**



- Program Expenses **71.2%**
- Mgmt & General **19.3%**
- Fundraising **9.5%**

Years FCI has  
supported co-ops:

**15**



# of active startups per corridor



# of owners:

**200,000**



# of new jobs  
created:

**2,200**



# of co-ops  
opened since 2006:

**155**



Startups participating  
in 2019 Peer Calls:\*

**22**

*\*Held in partnership with University of Wisconsin, ICDC, NFCA, and California Center for Cooperatives.*

In 2019, there were over 100 communities across the U.S. that were on the path to organizing their own food co-ops, from those just getting started to those about to open their doors. These startup food co-ops are organizing in every size community — from small rural communities, to mid-sized college towns, to dense urban cities; from Kodiak, Alaska to Boston, MA. Below is just a small taste of the diverse startup food co-ops organizing today.



## Oshkosh Food Co-op

*Oshkosh, WI (pop 66,729)*

Stage 3, implementation;  
incorporated in 2013

**Next milestone: hire general manager, complete construction**

Oshkosh, WI has grocery options but all are on the very edge of town. The central part of their city is a USDA food desert, with residents of central Oshkosh having no access to fresh food. In July 2020, ground was broken on the development where the co-op will be the anchor tenant. OFC's focus is on creating fresh food access in the center city, and also to become a place for the community to gather, and for local farmers to sell their goods.



## Fertile Ground Food Co-op

*Raleigh, North Carolina  
(SE neighborhood of the city)*

Stage 2B, planning;  
incorporated in 2013

**Next milestone: finalize site negotiations, fund the building of the store**

Fertile Ground Food Co-op was started with the goal of bringing fresh, high quality produce back to southeast Raleigh after years of having no access to it in their neighborhood. The organizers wanted not only to bring great food back to their community, but also to create that access themselves in a way that rooted wealth in their community through the cooperative model. "Community should control their own resources using a collective governing strategy, and that is the heart of the cooperative movement," states FGFC board chair, Erin Dale Bryd.



## Mad River Market

*Winchester, Connecticut  
(pop 11,242)*

Stage 2A, testing feasibility;  
incorporated in 2017

**Next milestone: reach 600 owners and begin site search**

The idea for Mad River Market was born when the very last grocery store in their downtown — which served not only their town but several small communities surrounding Winchester — closed. On the edge of the Berkshire Mountains, this rural community has almost 350 owners as of this writing and has pledged "to source everything we carry from local sources whenever possible," according to board member Phillip Allen. While they expect to carry some conventional food to meet the needs of everyone, their focus will be on supporting the local farmers and producers close to the store to help strengthen their local economy.

# Our Vision

Strengthening Communities through Cooperation — Food Co-op Initiative paves the way for New Food Co-op Excellence, leading to better fed, healthier communities with local control and connections.



# FOOD CO-OP INITIATIVE

New co-ops start here.

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[www.FCI.coop](http://www.FCI.coop)

## Our Mission

FCI improves the success  
and sustainability of new food  
cooperatives delivering healthier  
food in diverse communities  
across this country.

## Key Donors



## Sustaining Donors

Boise Food Co-op, Boise, ID  
Briar Patch Food Co-op, Grass Valley, CA  
Chequamegon Food Co-op, Ashland, WI  
City Center Market, Cambridge, MN  
City Market, Onion River Co-op, Burlington, VT  
Columinate  
Cook County Whole Foods Co-op,  
Grand Marais, MN  
The Co-op Natural Foods, Sioux Falls, SD  
Cultivate Community Food Co-Op, Benicia, CA  
Eastside Food Co-op, Minneapolis, MN  
Friendly City Food Co-op, Harrisonburg, VA  
Littleton Consumer Coop Society, Inc.,  
Littleton, NH  
Maple City Market, Goshen, IN  
The Merc, Lawrence, KS

Menomonie Market Food Co-op,  
Menomonie, WI  
Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op, Middlebury, VT  
Mississippi Market, St Paul, MN  
Monadnock Community Market Co-op,  
Keene, NH  
Monadnock Moon Food Co-op, Keene, NH  
Oneota Community Food Co-op, Decorah, IA  
Oryana Natural Foods Market, Traverse City, MI  
Outpost Natural Foods, Milwaukee, WI  
Ozark Natural Foods, Fayetteville, AR  
People's Food Co-op La Crosse, La Crosse, WI  
Seward Community Co-op, Minneapolis, MN  
Skagit Valley Food Co-op, Mount Vernon, WA  
Sugar Beet Co-op, Oak Park, IL  
Three Rivers Market, Knoxville, TN

Valley Natural Foods, Burnsville, MN  
Wedge Co-op TCCP, Minneapolis, MN  
Wheatsville Food Co-op, Austin, TX  
Whole Foods Community Co-op, Duluth, MN  
Willimantic Food Cooperative, Willimantic, CT  
Willy Street Co-op, Madison, WI  
Ypsilanti Food Co-op, Ypsilanti, MI

## Special Thanks

*...to the many donors who  
continue to show their belief  
in FCI by supporting our work!*