



FOOD CO-OP INITIATIVE

New co-ops start here.

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News from the
world of startup
food co-ops & those
who support them.



FCI prepares for our next chapter...

by Richard Dines, FCI Board Chair

The world is changing so rapidly and interest in food co-ops is higher than ever. FCI, as always, knows that we need to be on the forefront of serving the various needs of our startups, and scaling up the important work we're already doing.

As we launched our search for a new ED, our key criteria included someone who was going to build upon this vital work FCI does for startups. We needed someone with an understanding of the cooperative model and food co-op experience. But we also needed nonprofit experience, innate leadership skills

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Top: Inside the Vermont State House, 2018

Above: Presenting the Neighboring Cooperator Award to Patrice Lockert Anthony at the NFCA Annual Meeting, 2019

Is something exciting happening at your co-op? We could feature it in our next issue! Email us at info@fci.coop

FCI prepares for our next chapter *(cont.)*

and the ability to lead strategically and in line with our values, especially the passion and ability to prioritize and grow our work with marginalized communities.

We couldn't be more pleased to have found everything we were looking for and more in Faye Mack. Her start date with FCI is in late November, with transition time with Stuart through the end of the year.

We're so happy to introduce her to all of you — our friends and partners — with the Q&A below. We hope you'll all welcome Faye into the cooperative fold she's already so well-versed in, but now wearing the hat of Executive Director of FCI. Let's begin our next exciting chapter!



FCI welcomes our new Executive Director:

MEET FAYE MACK

Q: You bring an impressive depth of experience to FCI, including a track record of catalyzing meaningful change around food system issues. Can you tell us a bit about your background?

A: Yes, my background is in food systems and food security, advocacy, and community development. I also have a deep love of food co-ops, and the role of cooperatives in building more equitable communities, which is what I found really exciting about the ED role at FCI.

As far as background, most recently I served as the Advocacy and Education Director at Hunger Free Vermont, an advocacy, technical assistance, and education organization working to end the injustice of hunger in systemic and dignified ways. I began my anti-hunger work at Hunger Free Vermont by providing technical assistance and outreach for the SNAP program, and

later moved into organizational leadership and directing the organization's state and federal policy agenda and its work to engage communities in ending hunger. Notably, I helped Vermont become the first state to invest in universal school meals programs in 2015, and the third state to extend pandemic-era universal school meals.

Prior to joining Hunger Free Vermont in 2011, I spent many years working in grocery stores and the restaurant industry, I researched rural food access and sustainable food systems with the Transportation Research Center and the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont, and worked with sustainability- and environmentally-focused organizations in Washington state.

Q: There is so much work to do in repairing and building strong and resilient food systems in this country.

Did you always know you wanted to be part of this work?

A. Growing up in an agricultural state and in a community with a wide economic disparity certainly set me on this path. And, I've always been drawn to food system work, in particular because it is both personal and hyper-local, and also global and intersectional. Everyone has a story about food and what it means to them, and food systems are connected to climate change, systemic racism, the economic vitality of communities, and more. My professional and educational journey has evolved to support my ongoing work in the food system. I received my M.S. in Community Development and Applied Economics from the University of Vermont and my B.A. in Spanish and International Development and Social Change from Clark University. I also hold a Certificate in Nonprofit Management from Marlboro College.

Q: What experiences in your background do you feel were key to finding your place in the co-op world?

A: I have long been passionate about the cooperative model, food co-ops, and the broad transformative impact they can have in their communities. I grew from a casual shopper who never thought about the word "co-op" at the end of the stores' names to serving on the Board of my local food co-op for nine years. I have worked as a cashier, volunteered as a member worker, and served as chair on the Board for City Market/Onion River Co-op in Burlington, VT. I've also served as chair of the Board of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA) — a federation of food co-ops across the Northeast. While at Hunger Free Vermont, I also had the opportunity to help a number of co-ops launch Healthy Food Access programs in partnership with NFCA. This showed me some of the intent and vision that food co-ops have for truly being a place for their whole community. Experiencing the cooperative model from these varying perspectives really reinforced for me how co-ops in all their forms can positively impact communities and workers. It also introduced me to the enthusiastic and warm community of other people passionate about food co-ops; I've deeply appreciated the way food co-ops support each other, and have benefited so much from peer learning and expert support.

Q: What attracted you to the opportunity to lead FCI?

A: I was absolutely bowled over when I first looked at FCI and saw just how much the staff of three people is already accomplishing! They are a great example of an effective

nonprofit organization serving the needs of their community. I'm excited about the opportunity to carry this powerful work forward alongside the rest of the FCI staff. Stuart has spent his many years as the ED building an effective and inspiring organization. I am very much looking forward to picking up the baton and working with staff, the FCI Board, partners, and — most importantly — cooperative organizers across the country. They are helping their communities grow their power and autonomy over where and how they access food. I see my role at FCI as pivotal to supporting them, to ensure the cooperative model is available for everyone.

Q: What's on your agenda as you look to lead FCI into the future?

A: My first goal is to build upon that amazing foundation that the FCI team and partners have laid. We're already doing so much, yet there are still more needs of startups that are not being met. So FCI has to grow our impact, expand the work to fill those need gaps of startup food co-ops across the country. In order to do that, we need to grow our resources, which will allow us to expand our staff and our impact. I also want to begin a stakeholder input process as part of FCI's strategic vision process in 2023; I think that may identify even more opportunities for this dynamic organization to fulfill its mission to the co-op community. I am looking forward to listening and learning from the rest of the FCI team, partners, and stakeholders in the coming year, and bringing forward a robust vision and plan to further our work and support vibrant and sustainable startup food co-ops in communities across the country.

"I am honored to be joining FCI and to have the opportunity to carry this powerful work forward alongside the rest of the FCI staff."



photo: NFCA

Q: Tell us something about you and your family.

A: I live in the mountains of Vermont with my partner and young daughter. We are settling into a new home after moving from Vermont's "big city" to be near family, and are developing an ever growing list of house and garden projects to slowly chip away at. This winter we are excited to make pizza in our woodstove and get our daughter on some skis. They cheerfully indulge me by visiting every food co-op we pass by in our travels.

Neighboring Food Co-op Association
Annual Board and Staff Retreat (2019)



Major Grants and Startups — A Rising Opportunity

Ten years ago, the idea that a startup food co-op could raise \$500,000 in grant money as part of their capital would have been laughed at. Now, there are co-ops that have found millions of dollars in grant support. What has changed? A lot. Food co-ops have been encouraged to pursue the kinds of economic development funding that traditionally has gone to large corporations. The federal government has dedicated billions of dollars toward economic recovery from COVID-19, and charitable foundations have begun paying attention to the critical need for food access in underserved Black and Brown communities.

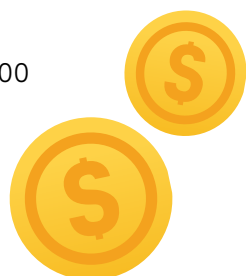
Here are a few examples of startups that have found significant grant funding to offset their debt and improve their feasibility.

Detroit Peoples Food Co-op/ Food Commons, Detroit, MI

Size: 10,000 ft² retail, 17,000 ft² gross; includes offices and community space

Over \$20 million total budget

- Deferred Developer Fee: \$420,000
- New Markets Investment: \$6,885,000
- Michigan Community Capital: \$6,860,000
- \$360,000 from a professional athlete
- \$500,000 from an anonymous donor



Gem City Market, Dayton, OH

Size: 10,000 ft² retail, 15,000 ft² gross, w/teaching kitchen, clinic, and community room

Projected Yr. 1 Sales: \$3.7 million

- 4 million in philanthropy for real estate
 - ◆ Grants and Philanthropy committed \$402,861
 - ◆ State of Ohio: \$200,000
 - ◆ City of Dayton: \$225,000
 - ◆ NMTC Equity: \$1,484,912
 - ◆ Montgomery County: \$175,000
 - ◆ HUD Hope VI: \$997,020
- Over \$1 million from local Healthcare orgs
- \$1 million HUD grant
- City, County, State: \$550,000
- Remainder from local foundations and donors

Prairie Food Co-op, Lombard, IL

Size: 8,000 ft² retail, 12,000 ft² gross

Projected Yr. 1 Sales: \$5.1 million

- State of Illinois \$807,000



Bethlehem Food Co-op, Bethlehem, PA

4,000 ft² retail, 6,500 ft² gross

Projected Yr. 1 Sales: \$3.28 million

- Congresswoman Susan Wild: \$2.9 million dollars. *We applied for \$900,000 and she loved the project so much she increased it. (2021)*
- City of Bethlehem: \$160,000 (2019)
- Senator Lisa Boscola: \$100,000 (2022)
- PA FFFI \$30,000 (2021); \$50,000 (2022)
- Naming Opportunities and donations \$116,000 (member owners). This likely to grow as they are about to launch a fundraiser

Where should you be looking?

ARPA (American Rescue Plan): Your community may have funds that need to be committed to serving the community in recovery from impacts of Covid. Several co-ops have successfully lobbied for money to provide community access to healthy food.

HFFI (Healthy Food Financing Initiative): This federal program has an annual application window (this may change in the coming year) for funding businesses that will improve food access and health in their communities. Many co-ops have applied and received either planning or implementation grants of \$25,000 to \$200,000. investinginfood.com

New Market Tax Credits: These are a lot of work and probably only appropriate to very large startup efforts. However, co-ops have received from \$1.5 million to over \$6.8 million through this program. [Learn more here.](#)

Local, Regional and State Economic Development: There is a lot of money available for job creation and economic development, but it requires good connections and a lot of research. The effort is worth it—not only may you get significant funding, the process helps build strong relationships with the community.

Mission-Related Charitable Organizations and Foundations: Again, this requires a lot of work to develop relationships and build trust. Local organizations are usually your best option. Look for those whose mission clearly intersects your own.



FCI's Annual Strategic Retreat

Every year the FCI Board of Directors and staff meet for our annual strategic planning retreat. Since we are scattered throughout the U.S., we look for a meeting place where FCI has been supporting one or more startups. This year we met in Detroit and were given a fabulous reception by members of the **Detroit Peoples' Food Co-op** team. Our meetings were very productive and resulted in renewed commitment for FCI to deepen our skills and capacity to support communities of color, small rural markets, and cities of all sizes. We spent time discussing the characteristics we wanted for a new Executive Director and made plans for the hiring process. Throughout our time together we were treated to the exceptional food from the neighborhood where the co-op is located, and got a tour of the site now under construction. Many thanks to all the Detroit Peoples' Food Co-op members, who helped make it all possible.



FCI staff and board visit the D-Town Farm (top) and the Detroit Peoples' Food Co-op construction site (bottom).

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startups currently
being served

help us serve more.

NEW CO-OPS START HERE

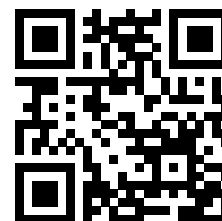


Why should you donate to FCI?

Funding from cooperators like you means our services can remain free to the hundreds of food co-op startups all over the U.S. The peer calls. The Trainings. The Workbooks. The Professional guidance. All these valuable materials startups need to successfully open a food co-op in their communities — **that's** what your donations fund.

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

Go to our donation page at **FCI.coop/donate** or use the QR code:



FCI's Year-End Campaign Running now through December 31!
Campaign goal: \$10,000

"Thanks to FCI's terrific ability to facilitate peer-to-peer learning, Chicago Market learned from SunCoast Market about pursuing Reinvestment Act funds — which led to our receiving *over \$5 million* in grant funds from the City of Chicago! **This is one of our most significant development wins, and we have FCI and SunCoast to thank for it!**"

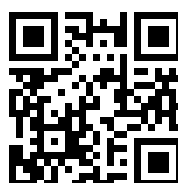
—Grant Kessler, Chicago Market Board of Directors

"Starting a food co-op can be a little scary at times... And everything is a lot less scary when you have someone by your side through the good, the bad, and everything in between! FCI is that someone — **providing help every step of the way and instilling confidence** and hope that we CAN and we WILL open a cooperative grocery store in our community."

— Krissy Krackowsky, The Butte Food Co-Op (Stage 2B Startup)

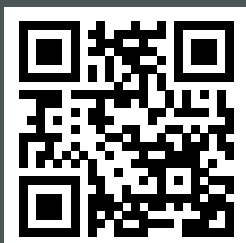
"I can't imagine trying to start a food co-op without the support of FCI. They have created a supportive **community of startups and advisors that offers continuous learning and the tools needed** to succeed. FCI is the nexus of the better food system, and the better world, that we are all striving to create."

— Kim Frink, Sun Coast Food Co-op



donate now:

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Visit **FCI.coop/donate** to support FCI's year-end campaign!



THAT'S A WRAP!

PLUS: Dates Set for 2023

The Fall 2022 FCI Live webinar series continues to be wildly popular as a space to learn and share in real-time about the startup food co-op movement with its highest registration ever for the Fall 2022 series that happened September 20–29.

The webinar series happens over a two week period and features both expert presenters as well as peer presentations of case studies on their startup food co-op's efforts. Anyone can register to take part in any and all of the series offerings, which are one-hour live webinars. All of the sessions are recorded and are then available on the Food Co-op Initiative YouTube page for all cooperators to utilize.

The focus of the series is the constantly evolving needs of startup food co-ops: making cutting-edge information available to the entire food co-op startup movement about how organizing startups is changing as quickly as possible. At the same time, the series also features foundational organizing trainings as well in areas where more tools and information is needed.

The fall 2022 series featured topics from the multiple stages of store design to using powerful community organizing tools in the co-op organizing space; from a deep dive on the "silent phase" of capital campaigns, to a peer presentation from the Detroit

People's Food Co-op on the evolution and lessons learned of their organizing efforts.

"We saw an unusually high amount of attendance from cooperators at established co-ops and from those that provide technical assistance to cooperatives this fall, which was great



The winter 2023 FCI Live series is planned for Jan. 30–Feb. 9. To get updates on when registration for the series will launch and what sessions will be offered, join the FCI email list by sending the staff a note at info@fci.coop or watch the www.fci.coop website.

to see," said JQ Hannah, Assistant Director of FCI. "While our focus is startup food co-ops, much of what is happening in the startup food co-op movement has a lot to offer the broader food co-op community."

"The presenters at FCI Live have been fabulous, very knowledgeable," says Barbara Pioli, Project Manager for the Wasatch Cooperative Market in Salt Lake City, Utah. "The support from this series is immensely appreciated. We can't wait to see what the next FCI Live series holds."

Allan Gallant Inducted into Cooperative Hall of Fame

One of FCI's greatest supporters and long-time board member, Allan Gallant, was recently inducted into the Cooperative Hall of Fame. Allan inspired us, ensured we got funding we needed, and always had kind words of encouragement. Allan passed away last year before he found out about this great honor. A large contingent of his family joined us at the National Press Club for the ceremony.



startup MILESTONES

The **Assabet Co-op Market's** new 8,400 SF retail space is now under construction in Maynard, Mass. and should wrap up before end of the year. The store now has more than 2,000 member-owners from more than 40 local towns and cities.



Manufacturing delays will push Assabet's opening to Spring/Summer 2023, and despite a successful owner loan campaign, an unprecedented 80% increase in construction costs has led to a sizable funding gap. Organizers recently launched the Bridge the Gap Campaign to raise an additional \$1.75 million in tax-deductible donations through their fiscal sponsor, Cooperative Development Institute. Stay tuned as the campaign gains steam!

An update from **North Flint** General Manager, Arlene Wiborn: Our construction is 85% completed, with our grand opening planned the 2nd quarter of 2023.

Equipment supply chain issues are still a major concern in the building of our store, but we have a dedicated team that are working hard to meet our opening deadlines. Operationally, the marketing team is getting the community engaged and having fun with it; our future primary grocery wholesaler relationship has been identified; agreements with 2nd secondary vendors are being signed; and progress is being made to ensure we open with Michigan's "double up food bucks" program in place for EBT users. Having SNAP benefits available on Day 1 is my number one priority right now.

We held our first member store walk-throughs this fall to great success. My smile will continue to shine on this project because I know how important it is needed for our community residents.



After more than six years of organizing, **SunCoast Market Co-op** held a community celebration on October 15th to announce the future location of what will be San Diego County's second food co-op and the first to open in 50 years. At the event, members of the high school marching band



paraded through SunCoast's monthly farmers market. Following the celebratory procession, members of the Board, the Mayor, Council members, and the Chamber of Commerce president shared their excitement about

achieving this milestone and described the importance of SunCoast Market to Imperial Beach and the region. The 6,200 square foot site is located in an existing retail center and is easily accessible by bicycle, car, bus and for pedestrians. The announcement has helped bring in over 40 new owner-members in the 10 days just since the site announcement. SunCoast is opening in a diverse and low/moderate income community, adjacent to the international border with Mexico.

SHARE Cooperative of Winston-Salem, N.C., began organizing their startup co-op in 2015 and has just opened the doors of their first cooperative grocery store, Harvest Market, in October of 2022! The co-op's principal goal is to provide service and assistance to its entire community



while promoting inclusivity. The newly-opened store offers conventional national brands as well as some natural and organic items, a deli, and a significant selection of locally-owned products.



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www.FCI.coop

Our Mission

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

*FCI is an equal opportunity provider
and employer*

UP & COMING

food co-op conference

Event Dates: September 14–16, 2023

Registration opens: June 1st, 2023

Location: Intercontinental Saint Paul Riverfront Hotel

Follow along for conference updates
and announcements at:
www.upandcoming.coop

Facebook

facebook.com/upandcoming.coop

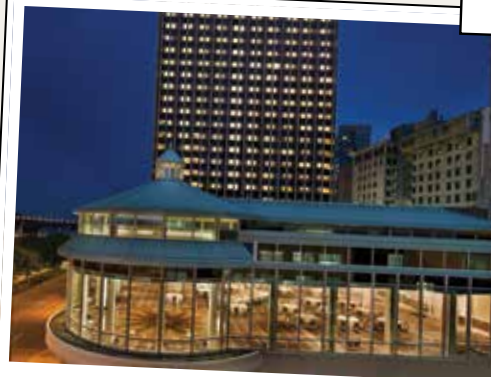
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**Questions? Contact us
at info@fci.coop or
dtrocha@icdc.coop**



See you Sept. 14-16, Twin Cities!



Intercontinental St. Paul Riverfront



beautiful spaces to gather