

Detroit People's
Food Co-op
(opened in May)



2024

IMPACTS REPORT



Wild Onion Market
(opened in June)



Food Shed Co-op (opened in May)



**FOOD CO-OP
INITIATIVE**

New co-ops start here.

OUR VISION

A world where all communities have the power and ability to build a thriving cooperative food system that provides them with the food they need and want.

OUR MISSION

We partner with communities to build a more just food system, providing critical support as they organize and open community-owned grocery stores.

OUR APPROACH

- **Provide expert guidance** and resources on how to start a sustainable and resilient food co-op
- **Facilitate opportunities** for food co-op organizers to connect with and learn from each other's challenges and successes
- **Co-create strategies** for overcoming systemic & economic barriers to community-controlled food access
- **Serve as an advocate** for the startup food co-op movement, ensuring startup needs and voices are present within the larger food co-op movement
- **Promote the food co-op model** as a tool for food sovereignty, racial justice, and equitable community development

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS



Chair: Darnell Adams (she/her)
*Leadership Coach, Facilitator,
Strategist, Firebrand Cooperative*



Vice Chair: Anne Misak (she/her)
*Senior Program Manager,
Healthy Food Financing Initiative,
Reinvestment Fund*



Treasurer: Val Roach (she/her)
*Executive VP and CFO, National
Cooperative Business Association
Cooperative League of the United
States of America (NCBA CLUSA)*



Secretary: Jamila Medley (she/her)
*Consultant in change management,
leadership development, governance,
DEI & participatory management*



Steve Cooke (he/him)
*General Manager, Friendly City Food
Co-op, Harrisonburg, Virginia*



Richard Dines (he/him)
*Senior Director, Credit Union
Awareness, LLC*



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



John Guerra (he/him)
*Business, Real Estate, and Store
Development Director, National
Co-op Grocers (NCG) Store
Development*



Richard Larochelle (he/him)
*a Founding Director of the
Fredericksburg Food Co-op, retired
Senior VP, National Rural Utilities
Cooperative Finance Corporation*



amaha sellassie (he/him)
*Associate Professor of Sociology and
Director of the Center for Applied
Social Issues, Sinclair Community
College, Dayton, Ohio*



Jeanie Wells (she/her)
*Retail Grocery Specialist and
Organizational Development
Consultant, Columinate*



FROM THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In 2024, FCI's five-year strategic plan moved from thought into action.

The Food Co-op Development Framework was created and launched in 2024 in response to years of feedback and new learning from startup food co-ops. The process for its creation was deeply collaborative and its creation, while a milestone, is just the starting point of a powerful map for the work of building new co-ops.

2024 was foundational to turning what we learned from the formation of our 2024–2029 strategic priorities into action: Streamlining our flagship programs like the virtual FCI Live conference to reach more cooperators more effectively; broadening our partnerships in the food justice space to co-create and learn; refining our staff structure to best serve this ever-evolving movement.

As we step into 2025, we know this moment is a uniquely challenging one for the startup food co-op movement. Luckily, cooperation (and food co-ops specifically) have historically been what people and communities turn to when facing tough moments — the power of creating solutions together. FCI will not be stepping *back*, but instead stepping *up* in 2025. Together, we will continue to build a just, cooperative food future.

In Cooperation,

Interim Executive Director



FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

In these times, where so many feel a deep sense of uncertainty and concern about the future, FCI will be doubling down on our shared cooperative principles: From cooperation amongst cooperatives, to co-op education, to concern for community — how FCI does its work is just as important as the work it does. With

new team members Chris Dilley, Director of Startup Support and Mercedes Gosby, Content and Data Manager, joining our staff team, we are poised for a fantastic 2025. We look forward to continuing to work in cooperation with you to reach for our shared aspiration: a world where every community has the power and ability to build a thriving cooperative that provides them with the food they need and want.

In cooperation,

FCI Board Chair; Leadership Coach, Facilitator, Strategist,
Firebrand Cooperative

Joining our team in November of 2022 as Executive Director, Faye Mack was exactly what FCI needed as we worked to strengthen as a nonprofit and set our future strategy.

Faye's leadership in 2023 of a movement-wide input process and building of our strategic plan had immediate impact on the efficacy of what FCI delivered for the startup food co-op movement.

The 2024 accomplishments we are sharing with you in this report were attained under Faye's leadership and we are deeply grateful to her for it.

As Faye often said, *"there has never been a more complicated time to build a food co-op, there has also never been a more impactful time to do so."*

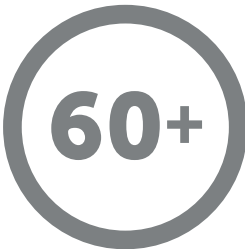


OUR IMPACT

We've been supporting startups for 20 years!



active startups
served by FCI
in 2024



inquiries in 2024
from communities
interested in starting
a food co-op.

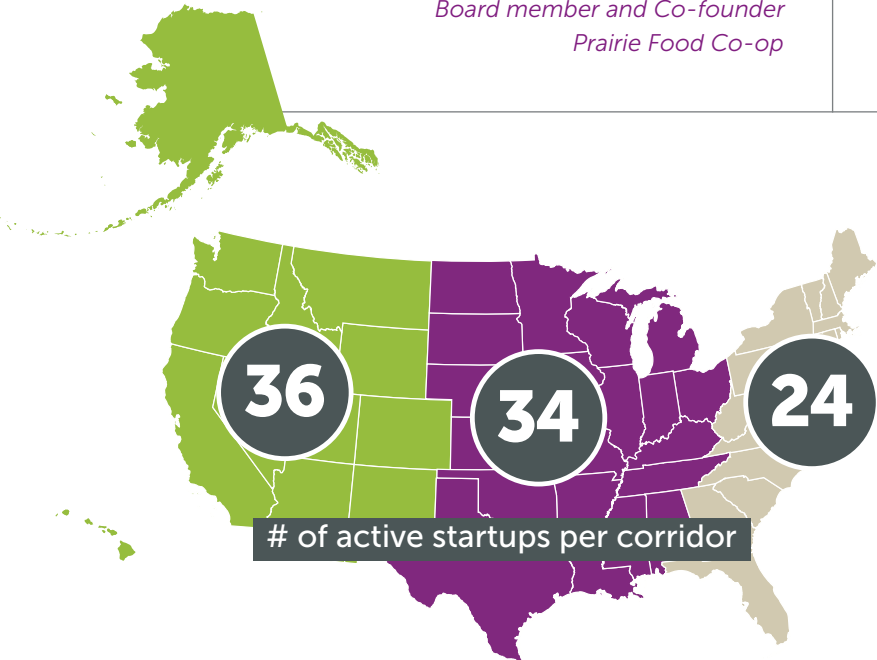
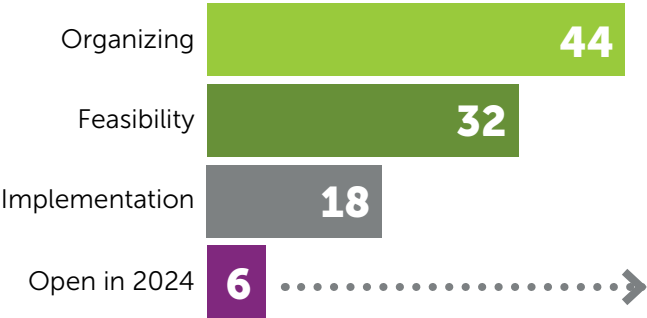


new startups
opened since our
work began

“As the only free program to assist co-op development, our co-op has relied heavily on the programs, peer calls, and advice provided by FCI over our 10 year development process.”

— Kathy Nash
Board member and Co-founder
Prairie Food Co-op

of co-ops by stage:



Of current startups, about
40% are in USDA rural communities
and 60% in urban areas.

6 startup food co-ops stocked their shelves and welcomed their member owners and greater community to shop for the first time in 2024. FCI was honored to have worked closely with three of these startups: Food Shed Co-op, Detroit People's Food Co-op and Wild Onion Market. We have supported and learned alongside them since their start. Congratulations to all six co-ops, their owners, and their communities!



DETROIT PEOPLE'S FOOD CO-OP | DETROIT, MI (MAY 1)

Detroit People's Food Co-op is not *just* a grocery store that opened its doors in May 2024. It's a shining example of how a predominantly Black community utilized their collective power to develop food sovereignty and economic power for themselves and their city. DPFC didn't stop at just providing fresh and high-quality food — some of which is grown directly in the neighborhood. Customers enjoy a variety of plant-based options as well as products from Black owned businesses. The co-op partners with other event organizers for community events like chess night and jam sessions.



WILD ONION MARKET

CHICAGO, IL (JUN 12)



TRI-CITIES FOOD CO-OP

RICHLAND, WA (OCT 30)



HAYFORK VALLEY

HAYFORK, CA (APR 11)



NEW LONDON FOOD CO-OP

NEW LONDON, MN (MAY 16)



FOOD SHED CO-OP | WOODSTOCK, IL (MAY 15)

With more than 2,200 owners, the Woodstock community celebrated Food Shed Co-op's opening across several days. Produce, mainly from local farmers, is one of the store's feature categories. This co-op also supports the community by featuring work from local artists and through the quarterly giving program that benefits nonprofit organizations. "With the Food Shed's 1 year anniversary on the horizon, we're proof that even with rising grocery prices throughout the country, local producers can keep prices reasonable, while also offering delicious, healthy alternatives to what the big-box stores have provided in the past."

STARTUP HIGHLIGHTS

Featuring startups utilizing FCI programs that are making great progress and that other startups can learn from.



SUNCOAST

Imperial Beach, CA (pop. 25,000) **Stage 4**

Next milestone: Open store

Over 50% of Imperial Beach's population identifies as Hispanic or Latino. Despite a poverty rate higher than the national average, SunCoast has developed several programs to address food accessibility. One being an innovative food box program, at the height of the pandemic, that got affordable fresh food to the local community while sourcing from local farmers and producers. This co-op is a leader in fundraising and working with municipalities, winning multiple Up & Coming awards for best practices and generously sharing their learning and support with the broader startup food co-op community. SunCoast has hired an experienced GM and is set to open in 2025.



COAST FORK FARM STAND

Cottage Grove, OR (pop. 10,000) **Conversion**

Next milestone: Incorporate & launch membership

Open year round and featuring local, organic and fair-trade produce and natural foods, this local small independent grocer is in the process of converting to a grocery co-op. Located in rural Oregon, these organizers are moving quickly to finish business development due diligence, while formalizing the steering committee's decision-making process. With the help of University of Oregon students, timelines and analyses were created and Coast Fork Farm Stand plans to incorporate, rebrand with a new name, and launch membership with additional support from Twinberry Commons.

"FCI has been there through every stage for us. The wide variety of resources is very valuable. We would recommend any co-op use your resources."

-Jodie Huegerich
Member; President of Board of Directors
Rooted Carrot Co-op Market



THIRD WARD FOOD CO-OP

Houston, TX (pop. 2.3M) Stage 1

Next milestone: Full feasibility study (market study & pro forma)

Residents of the Third Ward neighborhood are on a path to transform a former corner store into Houston's first Black-led food cooperative. Using sociocracy for decision making and collaborating with organizations such as the Houston Housing Authority encourages residents to have a deep investment in the project's success. This community-driven effort emerged in 2015 from resident participation in the plans to redevelop Cuney Homes, Houston's historic public housing community.



ONE COMMUNITY GROCERY CO-OP

St. Petersburg, FL (pop. 263,000) Stage 2

Next milestone: Reach 300 owners

Based in a historically Black neighborhood, this co-op formed after the closure of several chain stores. Discussions began in 2017 but organizing was impacted by the 2020 pandemic. One Community regained steam in 2024 with their 'dinner and discussion' events that engaged multiple audiences, and their phone banking efforts. Their renewed momentum for self-determined, community-owned grocery store supporting physical, mental, and economic health made them a finalist for the Cooperative Force award at Up & Coming 2024.



ROOTED CARROT CO-OP

Cedar Falls, IA (pop. 40,000) Stage 3

Next milestone: Find a site/location for the store

After more than 10 years of organizing and the pandemic lowered morale, 71% of Rooted Carrot members recommitted to pushing the project forward. They rebuilt their board and strengthened community relationships with a local food bank, holding member mixers, and cooking classes. Through their mobile app, members can access their membership card, special discounts and promotions from local partners. The co-op met with their mayor and several council members which resulted in planning to help Rooted Carrot find a location.

"It's inspiring to think about all the communities that have food co-ops now where there were none 20 years ago. FCI has been critical in realizing that vision."

— Tim Bartlett, Lexington Co-op
General Manager

UP & COMING

food co-op conference

*The 2025 Up & Coming is
happening September 11–13
in Kalamazoo, Michigan.*

Learn more at
www.upandcoming.coop



260

attendees
(132 first-time)

62

co-ops
from 25 states

4

workshops
Thursday: Black
Led Track

39

workshops
Friday/Saturday:
across 6 tracks

52

presenters,
speakers, and
panelists

"I've attended dozens of grocery industry conferences, but none have come close to matching the energy and enthusiasm of Up & Coming. It is incredible to be surrounded by people passionately committed to the hard work of building start-ups and community!"

— Alex, PFC Natural Grocery & Deli General Manager

The Up & Coming Conference was co-hosted by the Indiana Cooperative Development Center and Food Co-op Initiative. We were honored to partner with the **National Black Food and Justice Alliance** to host the fourth annual Black-led Day for over 100 Black cooperators.



2023–2024: 4TH YEAR

FCI PEER LEARNING GROUPS

FCI's Peer Learning Groups Program runs for 10 months, starting in the fall. Cohorts meet online to share progress updates, learn from one another and have trainings or conversations on topics they select to help them reach their next co-op milestone.

10

total peer groups

4–8 startups in a similar stage of development in each group.

55

startups participating



FCI Live showcased **21 expert sessions** with topics ranging from how to grow your co-op membership with social media to cultivating a strong board/GM relationship.

1432

Total
registrations



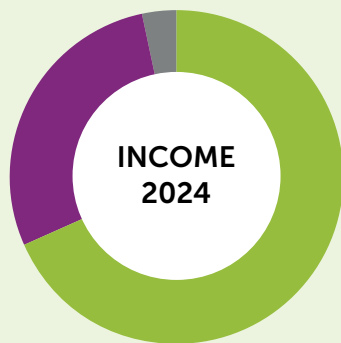
813

Attendees

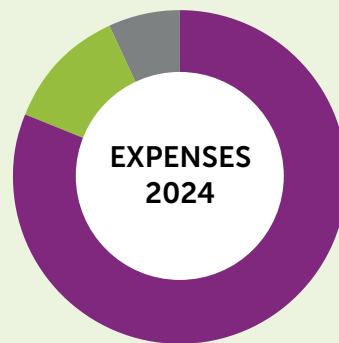
"We love the FCI Live workshops. Our leadership can easily access them at home and receive up to date information about how best to develop our start up food co-ops. Such great information to keep us on the best track for success! We're already using what we learned this year."

— Linda Jones,
Grand Rapids Food Co-op Initiative President

FCI 2024 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT



● Grants **\$339,502**
● Contributions **\$141,023**
● Other **\$16,097**



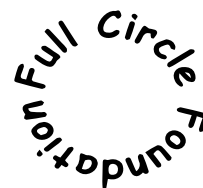
● Mgmt & General **\$64,116**
● Programming **\$430,295**
● Fundraising **\$35,322**

*Put **your** co-op on our 2025 map
with a donation pledge today!*

DONORS



Cooperative
Education
Fund
A Project of CBF



We are grateful to the **50+ individuals** who donated to FCI in 2024, either as monthly sustaining donors or with an annual contribution. Every gift supports our work immeasurably, thank you!

Thank you to the **10 organizations and businesses** that sponsored FCI Live in 2024! Your support helps us keep FCI Live free and accessible to all.

Thank you!

TO OUR 2024 FULL CIRCLE CO-OPS

52
co-ops,
20
states!

52 established
co-ops donated

\$80,455 total
raised

\$1,547 average
donation

WAYS CO-OPS PARTICIPATED:

- Direct donation
- "Rounding up" at the register for FCI (11 co-ops)
- Patronage dividends (1 co-op)

"Oryana was excited to support the work of FCI! They're a vital part of the food co-op movement. We often get calls from folks looking to start a co-op in their own community; it's nice to have a resource we can point them to and to know they'll find the information and support they need in the trusted hands of the team at FCI."

*Sarah Christensen,
Oryana Co-op CEO*





FOOD CO-OP INITIATIVE

New co-ops start here.

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PMB 208
Minneapolis, MN 55408

844-324-2667
www.FCI.coop

"When I think of FCI, I think of the very best guidance and instruction of any agency that I've worked with."



"It's impossible to get this guidance for free anywhere else. I applaud FCI's ability to provide resources that are timely, useful, highly ethical and meets the needs of our communities."

— Janet Howard
Fertile Ground
Food Co-op
Raleigh, NC

FCI's
FULL CIRCLE
campaign kicks off in JUNE

Those funds allow us to help more startups like Fertile Ground!