

Resource to Developing a Food Co-Op

Do people within

your community want to purchase fresh, healthy foods at an affordable price, but don't have access to a store; if so, it's time to establish a Food Co-Op within your community. This article will provide links that will help you gain a better insight on what is involved in creating a Community Food Co-Op. You will learn the definition of a Food Co-Op, how to establish a Food Co-Op, given examples of Food Co-Op business plans, and links to several Community Food Co-Op websites throughout America.

Definition

A **cooperative** is defined by the International Co-operative Alliance's Statement on the Co-operative Identity as an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise. A cooperative may also be defined as a business owned and controlled equally by the people who use its services or who work at it. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperative>)

A **food cooperative** or **food co-op** is a grocery store organized as a cooperative. Food cooperatives are usually consumers' cooperatives and are owned by their members. Food cooperatives follow the 7 Cooperative Principles. The cooperative principles are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice. These seven principles are: Voluntary and Open Membership, Democratic Member Control, Member Economic Participation, Autonomy and Independence, Education, Training and Information, Cooperation among Cooperatives, and Concern for Community.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_co-op) (<http://www.ncga.coop/about/coops>)

(<http://www.cgin.coop/node/3055>)

How to Start a Food Co-Op

The following links will provide you with insight on the steps involved in establishing your own Food Co-Op.

<http://cgin.coop/files/manual.pdf>

<http://www.ncga.coop/about/coops/gettingstarted>

http://www.uwcc.wisc.edu/info/i_pages/coopdev.html

http://www.cgin.coop/how_to_start

<http://www.uwcc.wisc.edu/manual/cover.html>

<http://www.thegreenguide.com/doc/49/coop>

Business Plans

Like any business, one needs to ensure they have a solid business plan prior to operation. Below are links to example business plans of various Food Co-Ops.

<http://www.denvercoop.com/?q=node/4>

<http://www.foodcoop500.coop/Default.aspx?id=192>

http://www.uwcc.wisc.edu/manual/chap_6.html

<http://www.friendlycityfoodcoop.com/dev-plan.shtml>

<http://www.practicalfarmers.org/programs/Iowa-Food-Cooperative.html>
<http://cgin.coop/files/manual.pdf> Chapter 6

Food Co-Ops throughout America

There are countless Food Co-Ops throughout America providing fresh, locally grown produce and other quality foods to citizens of their communities. Below are links to various Food Co-Ops throughout America.

<http://cityfoodcoop.com/who.html>
<http://www.foodcoop500.coop/Default.aspx?id=44>
<http://www.ncga.coop/member-stores>