



2025 Annual Report

DATA COLLECTED FROM DECEMBER 31, 2023 TO DECEMBER 28, 2024

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Letter From Our CEO



Dear Community Food Co-op Members,

This year, we are honored to celebrate a truly special milestone — the **55th anniversary of Community Food Co-op** in Bellingham, Washington. Since 1970, our Co-op has grown from a small, grassroots initiative into two thriving, community-owned grocery stores — driven by purpose, guided by shared values, and sustained by the collective power of cooperation.

When we reached our 50th anniversary in 2020, we had hoped to mark that occasion with all of you. But like so many things during the pandemic, our celebration was put on hold. That's why this year's 55th anniversary feels even more meaningful — a chance to reflect on our journey, honor our roots, and celebrate the future we're building together.

When our founders came together in 1970, it was a time of cultural change and new ideas. The first Earth Day was celebrated, the organic food movement was beginning to take shape, and in Bellingham, a group of neighbors envisioned a better way to feed their community — one rooted in health, sustainability, and cooperation.

That same vision lives on today in our more than 14,000 active member-owners, who continue to guide and sustain Community Food Co-op. At the heart of everything we do are the **Cooperative Values — self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity — along with the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.** These values aren't just words — they are the foundation of our decisions, our partnerships, and our purpose.

As someone who is new to our Co-op, I want to share that I've spent more than 30 years in the natural foods industry, and my passion for sustainable food and cooperative business began even earlier. As a child, I have fond memories of visiting the "health food store" with my dad. Upon entering, we were greeted by the scent of freshly baked bread, bulk spices, and herbal teas. That sensory memory has stayed with me, and when I first visited our Co-op, those memories came joyfully flooding back.

I am incredibly proud to be part of this Co-op — a place where values and community still matter. We are grateful every day for the dedication of our staff — both longtime and new team members — who bring care, knowledge, and heart to their work, and for our **strong partnerships with local farmers, fishers, ranchers, and makers**, whose commitment to quality and sustainability is at the core of our offerings.

Continued on next page...

Letter From Our CEO *(continued)*

This year's Annual Meeting theme — Farmland Preservation — is especially close to our hearts. Across Washington state, farmland is disappearing at an alarming rate, and the average age of a farmer is now over 60 years old. Without action, we risk losing not just farmland, but the people, traditions, and knowledge that sustain our food system. **Preserving farmland means protecting our food security, our local economy, and our ability to pass on a resilient agricultural system to future generations.**

And it's worth remembering why the cooperative business model matters now more than ever. Our Co-op is not owned by faraway shareholders or beholden to the whims of Wall Street. We exist to serve this community — not to chase maximum profit for profit's sake, but to create lasting value for people, planet, and place. When you shop at the Co-op, you're voting with your dollars — for a business model that keeps your money in our local economy, supports local producers, and reinvests in the health and well-being of our community. That's not just better business — it's a better future.

So whether you've been a member since the back-to-the-land movement of the early 1970s or just recently joined our Co-op family, thank you for being part of this journey. **Together, we're celebrating not just 55 years of history, but 55 years of values in action.**

Here's to the road behind us — and the bright path ahead.

With deep appreciation,



Lisa Sedlar
CEO/General Manager
Community Food Co-op



Board of Directors Update

As a locally owned, democratically controlled business, the Co-op is comprised of members who elect a Board of Directors to oversee the health of our cooperative.

The Board was very busy in 2024. We finalized the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, which was driven by members, shoppers, and staff input through surveys and focus groups. The Strategic Plan provides direction to the management and staff of the Co-op. Last fall, the Board and Leadership Team held a retreat to build connections and provide feedback on the draft Business Plan to advance our Strategic Plan goals. We look forward to measuring results and sharing progress toward the goals with the community.

The Board experienced some transitions last year. We are grateful for the time and service former Board members RJ Halloran, Joseph Correa, and Hopper provided to the Co-op. We welcomed new members Erin Grant, Jessica Gillis, and Alexander McIntyre. Erin brings years of experience working in the natural foods industry. Jessica is the Food and Farming Program Manager at Sustainable Connections. Alexander has been a long-term volunteer for the Co-op and is a food justice advocate. The Board looks forward to deepening our work together.

Last spring, the Board brought on an Interim General Manager, who provided strategic direction for the Leadership Team and support through the transition to our new CEO/General Manager, Lisa Sedlar. Lisa joined the team in the fall, and brings to the Co-op extensive leadership experience as a retail grocer in the natural and organic foods industry, and a passion for local food and community.

We are excited about what's to come for the Co-op under Lisa's leadership as we celebrate 55 years in Whatcom County! We welcome your input and attendance at a Board or Member Affairs Committee (MAC) meeting.

— Community Food Co-op Board of Directors



Heidi Beierle
Board Development Committee



Margaret Gerard
Farm Fund Committee Chair



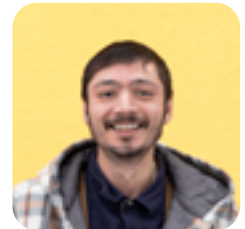
Jessica Gillis
Board Development Committee



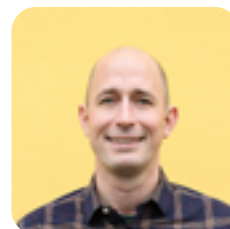
Erin Grant
Member Affairs Committee Chair



Diane Krapf
*Board Vice Chair
Board Development Committee*



Alexander McIntyre
Member Affairs Committee



Randy Rydel
Finance Committee Chair



Tony Vernon
*Staff Director
Finance Committee*



Laura Weiss
*Board Chair
Finance Committee*

55 Years and Beyond

Community Food Co-op has been rooted in Bellingham for 55 years. We serve our community with quality products and honest information because our core beliefs compel us to. Our quadruple bottom line — People, Purpose, Planet, and Profit — is the rootstock that anchors us as we work toward five strategic goals developed by our Board for 2024 to 2028.



COOPERATIVE OWNERSHIP

Creating welcoming spaces where members feel connected does more than build community — it strengthens our Co-op financially. When members understand the value of ownership beyond shopping, they become ambassadors who help us grow.



STRONG LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

Supporting local farmers reduces the environmental cost of transporting food, while preserving regional agriculture and food systems. Through our Farm Fund, and by focusing on purchasing locally, we help these producers grow, creating a resilient economy that benefits the planet while providing our community with more options for high-quality, locally sourced food.



EXEMPLARY WORKPLACE

Our staff thrive in a culture of trust and collaboration, often choosing us because our values align with theirs. We provide a stable workplace by fostering a supportive environment and providing competitive compensation and benefits to ensure staff feel valued and respected.



HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

By offering products at various price points and promoting ways to save by buying in bulk and through food assistance programs, we work to make nutritious food accessible to more people, improving the health outcomes of our whole community.



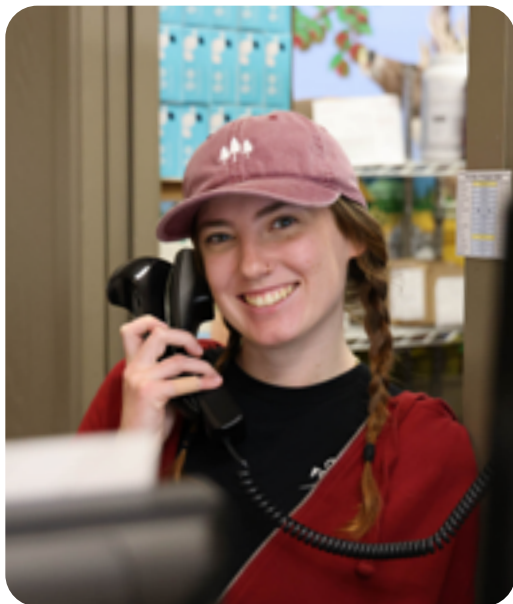
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

We actively implement industry-leading sustainable practices in our operations, adopting new materials and technologies to reduce our environmental impact. Through these initiatives, advocacy support, and partnerships with local organizations, we extend our impact beyond our store walls.

When you shop our stores, attend our events, and engage with our advocacy efforts, you help build the foundation for a more just, sustainable, and democratic future in Whatcom County and beyond. Find the entire Strategic Plan online at communityfood.coop/strategic-plan.

People

COMPREHENSIVE BENEFITS FOR STAFF

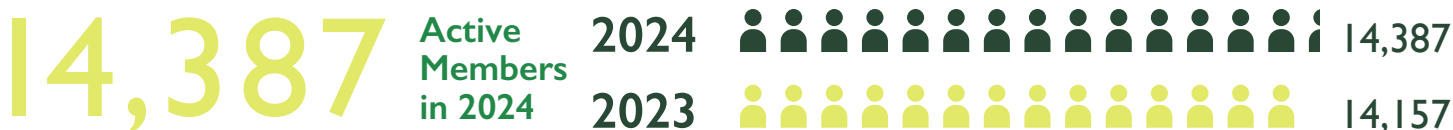


At the Co-op, we value our staff members deeply, and offer more than just a paycheck. We foster a supportive and fun work environment united in the cooperative spirit, while serving our community. Our affordable and comprehensive benefits package includes medical, dental, vision, a 401k with up to 6% matching, paid time off, and life insurance.

We strive to offer consistent schedules for staff — something of a rarity in retail. 85% of our staff are full-time and for our part-time staff, who are often students, we offer flexible scheduling.

We go beyond traditional benefits with a very generous staff discount, free “non-sellable” food, and the ability to place special orders at wholesale cost — benefits most grocers don’t offer. We value work-life balance, promote from within, and provide on-demand pay for wages already earned.

In 2025, we will introduce our first union contract with local Teamsters 231, a significant milestone for the Co-op. We look forward to sharing more about this in next year’s report.



Active members are defined as non-senior members who are up-to-date on their annual dues and have shopped at the Co-op in the past three months.

YOU DONATED \$6,340 AT CHECKOUT... AND THAT’S JUST THE START

In 2024, we raised \$6,340 for local organizations through register donations, demonstrating our members' commitment to creating positive change. As we mark our 55th year, we're evolving how we support our neighbors with a new PIN pad donation program. This initiative creates a direct connection between your generosity, our community, and people in need — embodying the cooperative spirit of mutual aid and solidarity. Funds raised will go directly to the beneficiary, starting with Bellingham Food Bank, who will use them to purchase locally grown produce.



People

IN 2024, YOU HELPED RAISE \$32,776!

Our Community Shopping Days program channels the collective power of Co-op shoppers to support local organizations. On the third Saturday of each month, 2% of sales are donated to a featured group, helping to strengthen the fabric of our community.

Each year, our Member Affairs Committee carefully selects 12 organizations whose missions align with our values. These three partners exemplify the community-building work we're proud to support:



REBOUND FAMILIES

Rebound Families works to break cycles of abuse, neglect, and poverty for families affected by trauma. Their programs provide parents with essential skills and offer specialized support for children facing complex challenges. As a connecting force between state agencies, schools, and community services, they ensure families receive comprehensive support tailored to their unique needs, embodying the cooperative spirit of neighbors helping neighbors.



RAGFINERY

Sustainability champion Ragfinery has been helping Bellingham transform discarded fabrics into creative new projects since 2014, while providing valuable job training for disadvantaged community members. After a devastating fire damaged their building on December 29, 2024, the community rallied to donate over \$25,000 to support this locally loved business. The future of their physical shop remains uncertain, but Ragfinery continues to prove their commitment to sustainability and creative reuse with workshops, free mending events, and upcycle challenges throughout the community.



VAMOS OUTDOORS PROJECT

Vamos Outdoors Project builds community by connecting Latine, migrant, and multilingual youth and families to the outdoors in Whatcom and Skagit counties. From swimming to snowboarding, biking to backpacking, Vamos' free programming breaks down barriers to many facets of outdoor life in the PNW, and provides transportation, equipment, instruction, and nutritious meals for all participants. Through these experiences, youth build confidence, develop life-long passions, and form meaningful connections to our region.



WE DONATED TO 160+ COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Co-op proudly supports community organizations and events that bring people together, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, Bellingham Pride, Northwest Tune-Up, and the Subdued Stringband Jamboree. These partnerships reflect our commitment to building an inclusive community where people from all walks of life can celebrate our shared humanity.

Purpose



\$58,670

First Step Grants

\$26,000

Next Step Grants

2024 FARM FUND GRANTS AND LOANS

Since 2000, our Farm Fund has offered grants to strengthen the market for organic and sustainable agriculture in Whatcom County. These dollars encourage ecological and socially responsible farmland stewardship, thereby supporting resilient, successful farms. The end result is increased access to healthy food that's grown, raised or processed by local producers.

In 2024, the Farm Fund gave out \$84,670 in grants to 28 small-to-midsize local farms and markets in Whatcom and Skagit counties, and one \$12,000 loan. These funds supported critical and emergency needs, and assisted with market expansion, land and infrastructure improvements, and local food accessibility. Projects included equipment purchases to grow farm businesses, strengthen sustainable agriculture practices, increase operational efficiencies, and provide an unlimited SNAP Match at the Bellingham Farmers Market.

The Farm Fund is made possible by donations from Co-op members and shoppers, Whatcom Community Foundation, a Co-op Board annual donation allocation, and local organizations.

SUPPORTING HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

Improving food access aligns with the cooperative values of social responsibility, inclusivity, and fairness. Our goal is that everyone, regardless of income, can benefit from the Co-op's offerings.

Western Wednesday is a Downtown Bellingham Partnership program that we participate in by offering students from area colleges 5% off any purchase every Wednesday.

10% Smart Trips encourages people to use sustainable transportation modes like walking, biking, carpooling, and public transit, by offering incentives and rewards.

Washington State Fruit and Vegetable Prescription is a program that works with health care centers to supply produce to patients who otherwise could not afford it.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides low-income families with financial aid specifically for fruit, vegetables, meat, and dairy products.

5% Student Discount

\$6,126

(23,234 Transactions)

10% Smart Trips

\$10,761

(23,234 Transactions)

Veggie RX

\$45,090

(9,018 Transactions)

SNAP

\$1,203,709

(44,322 Transactions)

TACKLING FOOD INSECURITY AT WWU

Through their Food Security Pilot program, Western Washington University identified 65 food-insecure students and in partnership with the Co-op, provided them with \$1,000 quarterly to spend on food at our stores. Students reported reduced stress, healthier eating, and showed higher retention rates — embodying our 55-year commitment to making healthy food accessible to as many people as possible.

Purpose



We supported 229 local producers in 2024.

WHY SHOP LOCAL?

During harvest season, we source over 20% of our produce from the five counties surrounding us: Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan, Island, and Snohomish. By shopping with us, you're investing in a self-sustaining local economy and making a stand against corporate consolidation — local businesses recirculate up to four times more revenue within our community than retail chains. Your dollars support local farmers, create meaningful jobs, and strengthen our region's food system.

THE REAL FOOD SHOW

For over a decade, the Real Food Show has combined circus arts, humor, and education to inspire kids to make healthy food choices by reaching them at school. In 2024, these talented performers delighted **2,425 children at eight elementary schools** across the region, and the program celebrated its 10-year anniversary. Since its inception, the show has reached nearly 40,000 children.



COOKING UP COMMUNITY

Our cooking class program brings diverse culinary traditions to life through hands-on learning and delicious demonstrations. This partnership with **Whatcom Community College** creates a vibrant space where people connect, learn life skills, and explore global flavors right in our Connections Building.



1,188 STUDENTS
27 INSTRUCTORS
14 KIDS' CLASSES
71 TOTAL CLASSES

Planet

FEEDING COMMUNITY

At the Co-op, we believe food should nourish people, not landfills. Through our continued partnership with **Sustainable Connections' Food Recovery Program**, we provided 81,375 pounds of food — the equivalent of 67,813 meals — to our neighbors in need in 2024.



67,813
meals donated



REDUCING WASTE

Through better forecasting, we decreased the amount of food donated by 17.4% compared to 2023 and by 20% compared to 2022. The USDA estimates that between 30% to 40% of the nation's food supply goes to waste, so taking every measure to reduce the amount of food that ends up in landfills is critical. Food that does not go to the Food Recovery Program is used by a local pig farm as feed or, as a last resort, turned into compost.

85% waste
diversion
organization-wide

We diverted 85% of our operational waste from landfills through recycling and composting programs. We help our customers make sustainable choices by selecting materials that have end-of-life options beyond the landfill. By weight, **70% of our packaging was commercially compostable** and 19% was curbside recyclable. Look for new and reduced packaging programs in 2025, including a durable silverware program rolling out on Earth Day.

SOLAR PRODUCTION

The Holly Street solar array, live since February 2024, generated **62%** (65,224 kWh) of our building's electricity.

65,224 kWh is equal to



46 metric tons of CO₂
emissions offset, equivalent to
1,150 trees planted



7.24 homes
powered for a year



235,000 miles
driven in an EV



1,087 LED bulbs
running 24/7 for a year

Profit

SALES GROWTH

Year over year, we increased sales by 8%. The majority of growth was in our Grocery, Deli, and Produce departments. Thanks to our community for choosing to shop with us!



INCOME STATEMENT

	2024	2023
Gross Sales	\$46,011,300	\$42,829,818
Gross Profit %	39.09%	37.74%
Gross Profit \$	\$17,984,252	\$16,165,301
Total Staffing Expenses	\$11,032,568	\$10,976,529
Total Operating Expenses	\$5,156,939	\$5,132,837
Interest	\$242,523	\$241,033
Pre-Tax Income	\$1,806,080	\$77,012
Taxes	\$59,331	\$36,629
Net Income	\$1,746,749	\$40,383

72% OF SALES TO MEMBERS

Our stores are for the whole community to enjoy. While a membership is not required to shop with us, we are proud that so many of our customers are members. Some of the benefits members receive include special discount days, voting privileges, and much more.

\$46,011,300

TOTAL SALES

- CERTIFIED ORGANIC**
\$17,271,370
- LOCAL**
\$9,826,655
- HOUSEMADE DELI & BAKERY**
\$4,753,868





CORDATA

315 Westerly Rd, Bellingham

Open Daily 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
communityfood.coop

DOWNTOWN

1220 N Forest St, Bellingham