

Community 
FOOD CO OP



2026 Annual Report

DATA COLLECTED FROM DECEMBER 29, 2024 TO DECEMBER 27, 2025

Table of Contents

BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATE	2
LETTER FROM OUR CEO	3
OUR STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS	5
PEOPLE	
<i>STAFF BENEFITS</i>	6
<i>MEMBER SAVINGS</i>	6
<i>55 YEARS OF COMMUNITY</i>	7
<i>COMMUNITY CHANGE FUND</i>	8
<i>COMMUNITY SHOPPING DAYS</i>	9
PURPOSE	
<i>FARM FUND GRANTS</i>	10
<i>DONATIONS & SPONSORSHIPS</i>	10
<i>HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS</i>	11
<i>WHY SHOP LOCAL?</i>	12
<i>COOKING CLASSES</i>	12
PLANET	
<i>REDUCING WASTE</i>	13
<i>BRING IT BACK PROGRAM</i>	13
<i>PLASTIC FREE JULY</i>	13
<i>SKIP THE SLIP CAMPAIGN</i>	13
PROFIT	
<i>INCOME STATEMENT</i>	14
<i>PATRONAGE DIVIDEND</i>	14

Board of Directors Update

As a locally owned, democratically controlled business, the Co-op is comprised of 14,682 members (and growing) who elect a Board of Directors to oversee the health of our cooperative.

Last year, members voted to reelect Margaret Gerard, a local farmer, and Laura Weiss, a waste reduction entrepreneur, to the Board. Staff Co-op members elected Noa Kauanoe as the Staff Director. Noa has been with the Co-op for over six years, supporting the Downtown store's front-end operations. The Board continues to deepen their work together alongside the strong leadership of our CEO/GM, Lisa Sedlar.

This year, the Board's work focused on learning about innovations in the co-op sector and refining the governing policies and procedures. The Board received a member advocacy request for product removals that prompted thoughtful dialogue among members and directors. This type of discussion reflects the complexity and responsibilities of being a community-owned store, and we always appreciate member input.

The Member Affairs Committee (MAC) has been busy launching a new series of member engagement events. Last year, MAC hosted wonderful guest presenters from our community, who taught members to forage mushrooms, deepen their understanding of food as medicine, and create medicinal salves. The event series will continue in 2026 with new opportunities to learn and connect with other Co-op members. We welcome your ideas around membership engagement, and we hope to see you at an event sometime!

We are grateful the Co-op is a pillar of community and connection. We are excited and hopeful for what is to come under Lisa's leadership as we celebrate 56 years in Whatcom County! We welcome your feedback and attendance at a Board or MAC meeting. To attend a meeting, contact: boardofdirectors@communityfood.coop.

– Community Food Co-op Board of Directors



Heidi Beierle
Board Development Committee



Margaret Gerard
Farm Fund Committee Chair



Jessica Gillis
*Member Affairs Committee
& Farm Fund Committee*



Erin Grant
*Member Affairs
Committee Chair*



Noa Kauanoe
*Staff Director &
Member Affairs Committee*



Diane Krapf
*Board Vice Chair & Board
Development Committee Chair*



Alexander McIntyre
*Member Affairs Committee &
Board Development Committee*



Randy Rydel
Finance Committee Chair



Laura Weiss
*Board Chair &
Finance Committee*



Annabelle Wesley
*Board Administrator &
Farm Fund Administrator*

Letter From Our CEO



Dear Community Food Co-op Members,

As we prepare for this year's Annual Meeting, I'm reminded that the Co-op is about so much more than just groceries. It's about people, place, and the shared belief that food has the power to bring us together. This will be only my **second Annual Meeting as CEO**, and over the past year and a half, I've had the pleasure of getting to know many of you, along with lots of farmers, community partners and of course our staff — all of whom make this Co-op such a special place. I continue to be inspired by how deeply this community cares about its food system and the values that have guided the Co-op for more than five decades.

We felt that spirit in a big way last summer when more than **500 members and neighbors joined us at Traskside for our 55th Anniversary Celebration**. It was a joyful afternoon filled with music, food, jugglers, tie-dyeing t-shirts, and even some square dancing. What stood out most was the feeling of

community. People gathered around food, laughing together and connecting with friends and neighbors. In many ways, that afternoon captured the essence of what a cooperative is meant to be.

Food has always been a connector. It connects us to the land that sustains us, to the farmers and fishers who steward that land and water, and to one another. That idea of connection is at the heart of this year's Annual Meeting theme: **Indigenous food systems and generosity**.

Here in the Pacific Northwest, Indigenous communities have understood for thousands of years that food is inseparable from stewardship, reciprocity, and care for future generations. In particular, salmon and the Indigenous culture surrounding it are central to the ecological story of our region. This food source nourishes people while reminding us of our responsibility to protect the rivers, watersheds, and ecosystems that sustain life.

This year, we are honored to welcome to our Annual Meeting a speaker from **Children of the Setting Sun Productions** — a local organization dedicated to sharing Salish stories and values rooted in gratitude, respect, and responsibility for the land and waters. Their work helps amplify Indigenous voices and reminds us that traditional foods like salmon are not just nourishment, but part of a living cultural and ecological system that connects people to place.

Integral to this interconnectedness is the idea of generosity — a value held deeply within our Co-op community. Over the past year, our members and shoppers demonstrated their generosity in remarkable ways. Together, we raised **more than \$53,602 for our Farm Fund**, helping support local farmers who were impacted by recent flooding. We also raised **over \$257,668 for Bellingham Food Bank**, which went toward purchasing fresh produce from local farmers to be distributed throughout our community.

During the government shutdown last fall, we also created our **Lend a Hand discount** to support SNAP shoppers facing increased food insecurity. These efforts are powerful reminders of the reciprocal nature of generosity: When a community comes together around food, we can care for one another while also supporting the farmers and producers who nourish our region.

At its core, the cooperative model is built on this same idea of shared responsibility and care. Every time you shop at the Co-op, you are supporting local farmers and food makers, helping to circulate dollars in our regional economy, and strengthening a food system that values people, place, and sustainability.

As someone who has spent more than three decades working in the natural foods industry, I feel incredibly fortunate to be part of this community. What makes our Co-op so special is the people. Because at the end of the day, a cooperative is not defined by its buildings or even the food on its shelves. It is defined by the **people who show up for one another**. The farmers, fishers, ranchers who grow and raise our food, our great staff members who bring it to our shelves, and YOU, our members who believe in doing business a little differently than all the other grocers in town.

That does not mean we always get everything right, or that we always see things the same way. But that is part of the beauty of a cooperative. We listen to one another, we learn from one another, and we keep working to do better. Making space for different perspectives while staying grounded in our shared values is what keeps this Co-op healthy and sustainable for the long run.

Thank you for being part of this community and for helping keep the cooperative spirit strong. We had a good year in 2025, and we are looking forward to building on that success in 2026.

With love and gratitude,



Lisa Sedlar
CEO/General Manager
Community Food Co-op



Our Strategic Plan Progress

Community Food Co-op has been rooted in Bellingham for 56 years. Our quadruple bottom line — People, Purpose, Planet, and Profit — anchors us as we work toward five strategic goals developed by our Board of Directors for 2024 to 2028. Here's how we made progress in 2025.



COOPERATIVE OWNERSHIP

We celebrated our 55th anniversary with a community party at Kulshan Trackside that drew more than 500 members and neighbors for an afternoon of live music, circus performances, tie-dye, snacks, and square dancing. We also introduced our member engagement events — exclusive gatherings organized by our Member Affairs Committee that bring our Co-op family together.



STRONG LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

When devastating floods hit our region in late 2025, our Farm Fund provided emergency relief to local farmers facing crop loss, damaged infrastructure, and an uncertain road ahead. We redirected our register donation program — called Community Change Fund — to get dollars directly to the farmers who grow our food. This effort builds on our longstanding commitment to organic and sustainable agriculture in Whatcom and Skagit counties.



EXEMPLARY WORKPLACE

Approximately 170 Co-op workers ratified their first-ever Collective Bargaining Agreement with Teamsters Local 231, reaching a meaningful milestone for our staff. The agreement brought wage increases, improved holiday pay, and workplace protections. Becoming a union shop reflects our commitment to our staff.



HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

When SNAP funding was suspended in November, we moved quickly: Within days, we launched Lend a Hand — a 25% discount for anyone in our community struggling to put food on the table. We also doubled our student discount from 5% to 10%, making good food more accessible.



SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Our Holly Street solar array generated 81% of that building's electricity in 2025 — up from 62% in its first year — cutting electricity costs in half. We also launched a durable silverware program called Bring It Back, diverting over 62,800 plastic utensils from the waste stream.

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 our Strategic Plan online at communityfood.coop/strategic-plan.

People

THE FACES BEHIND YOUR CO-OP



More than 230 people work at our Co-op. They stock shelves, bake cakes, slice cheese, answer questions, and build relationships with you, the community we serve.

Most of our staff work full-time and many have been here for years, even decades. Employees are drawn to the Co-op because of our shared values.

We support them with a benefits package that goes beyond the basics: medical, dental, and vision insurance; a 401(k) with up to 6% matching; paid time off; life insurance; commuter reimbursement; and

a 25% employee discount on food. We also offer special orders at wholesale cost, on-demand pay, and a commitment to promoting from within. And because we're a grocery store, we wind up with a lot of nonsellable food. Our staff gets first pick before we donate the rest.

A PROUD TEAMSTERS UNION SHOP

In 2025, the Co-op became a union shop when approximately 170 workers ratified their first-ever Collective Bargaining Agreement with Teamsters Local 231. Since the Industrial Revolution, unions have fought for fair wages, safe working conditions, and dignity on the job. We're incredibly proud that our staff now carry that tradition forward. The new contract brings wage increases, improved holiday pay, and a guaranteed seat at the table.



OUR MEMBERS SAVE BIG

Three-quarters of every dollar spent at the Co-op comes from our members. That kind of loyalty deserves more than a thank you, so in 2025 we added a fourth 10% member discount. They now occur in February, July, October, and November, so that you can stock up throughout the year. These discounts generated a savings of \$312,237 — money that goes back to the people who make this Co-op possible.



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.

People

CELEBRATING 55 YEARS OF COMMUNITY

It had been years since the Co-op hosted a community gathering, but it was worth the wait as our party surpassed our wildest expectations.

On September 6, more than 500 members, shoppers, and neighbors packed Kulshan's Trackside Beer Garden for our 55th Anniversary Celebration. Attendees enjoyed over 500 mini cupcakes from the Co-op Bakery, laughed to a lively show by Bellingham's circus performers, danced to music from local bands The Shades and Analog Brass, and locked arms in a square dance called by Devin Champlin. There was tie-dye, face painting, and organic Gala apples from Organically Grown Company. And you raised \$665 for the Co-op's Farm Fund through our raffle.

To commemorate our anniversary, we also collaborated with two local makers on limited-edition products. Tony's Coffee roasted a special organic, fair trade Anniversary Blend with notes of chocolate, hazelnut, and cherry. And our friends at Kulshan Brewing Company brewed Love Child — a Cold IPA sold in six-packs and served on draft at our celebration.

In honor of 55 years of serving this community, we interviewed employees, shoppers, and local producers, both young and old. They share stories about their connection to the Co-op in this self-produced video. Scan the code to watch it.





ENGAGING WITH OUR MEMBERS

In 2025, our Member Affairs Committee launched a new series of member-exclusive events designed to get Co-op members out from behind their shopping carts and into experiences, together. Three events kicked off the series: a class on daily health habits led by a functional medicine coach, an herbal salve and lotion-making workshop (so popular we had to add a second date), and an outdoor mushroom foraging excursion.

The foraging event was particularly memorable — our members trekked into the woods near Deming with botanist Jazmen Yoder of Northwest Natura, where they spent two-and-a-half hours learning to identify chanterelles, lion’s mane, and oyster mushrooms in their natural habitat. Jazmen delved into the ethics of when to pick and when to leave fungi alone. Her course is a prime example of how we look forward to engaging our members in 2026 and beyond.

MAKING CHANGE WHILE YOU CHECK OUT

In 2025, we launched our **Community Change Fund** — a register donation program that lets you support a local organization every time you shop. When you make a donation at the PIN pad, these dollars directly strengthen our regional food shed.

Our first beneficiary was Bellingham Food Bank, and the response from our community was extraordinary: Co-op shoppers raised more than \$257,000 to help the food bank purchase fresh produce from local farms. This served the dual purpose of supporting our local food system — specifically, our farms and farmers — while securing fresh, healthy food for the roughly 5,000 households that rely on the food bank each week.

Within days of devastating floods hitting our region in late 2025, we redirected the Community Change Fund to support our Farm Fund’s emergency relief efforts, raising dollars for Whatcom and Skagit County farmers facing crop loss, damaged infrastructure, and months of uncertainty.

Whether it’s feeding families through Bellingham Food Bank or providing emergency relief to farmers after a flood, this program bolsters our community’s capacity to support itself.



“In three months, the Co-op generated enough revenue for us to have pretty significant purchasing power with some local farms. And that makes me feel good during really challenging times. It should make anyone who participated in that program feel good — and feel like they are having an impact.”

Mike Cohen
Executive Director, Bellingham Food Bank

People



COMMUNITY SHOPPING DAYS

On the third Saturday of every month, two percent of our sales go directly to a local organization selected by our Member Affairs Committee. In 2025, Co-op shoppers raised **\$33,964** for 12 community partners. Here's what your dollars supported.

PEOPLE'S LAND TRUST

\$3,017 toward maintenance and upgrades for seven permanently affordable houses in Bellingham, continuing their 50+-year legacy.

ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF BELLINGHAM

\$2,890 to support the Eating Healthy Program, which brings gardening and nutrition education to more than 3,200 area students.

HOMESNOW!

\$2,801 to fund volunteer-built tiny homes for people experiencing homelessness in our community.

CHARDI KALA PROJECT

\$3,278 for classroom presentations and Gurdwara tours that connect Whatcom County's Sikh and non-Sikh communities.



WILD BIRD CHARITY

\$2,960 to help feed kids on the weekends. Wild Bird's food bag program reached 1,346 children in 49 schools with more than 32,000 bags of food.



BLUE SKIES FOR CHILDREN

\$2,494 to sponsor music lessons, martial arts, gymnastics, dance, and art classes for 67 low-income children.

MIRACLE FOOD NETWORK

\$2,372 to rescue surplus food from local restaurants and grocery stores and redistribute it to roughly 8,500 people each week through community food hubs.

COMMON THREADS FARM

\$2,454 to support school-day cooking and gardening classes at elementary schools in Bellingham, benefitting 1,162 students.

FOSTER HEARTS

\$2,689 to purchase new clothing, hygiene products, and school supplies for children entering foster care, who often have few personal possessions.

LOVE LAUNDRY

\$2,620 to provide laundry services for neighbors experiencing homelessness, through a partnership with Opportunity Council.

BRIGADOON SERVICE DOGS

\$3,157 to replace aging training equipment for incarcerated trainers, who teach foundational skills to service dogs.



STEWART MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY FOREST

\$3,232 to improve trails and increase public access to 2,340 acres of community-owned forestland in the South Fork Nooksack Valley.

Purpose



\$15,500
First Step Grants

\$7,500
Next Step Grants

2025 FARM FUND GRANTS

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. In alignment with the Co-op's goal of building a stronger local food system, the grants increase access to healthy food that is grown, raised, or processed by local producers.

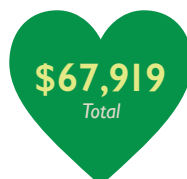
In 2025, the Farm Fund awarded **\$23,000** in grants to seven small-to-midsize local farms in Whatcom and Skagit counties. These funds supported equipment and infrastructure to streamline and enhance farm operations. Projects included wash-and-pack station improvements, a delivery van to transport farm goods to market, a tractor, soil testing, and materials for new laying nests for hens.

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.

DONATIONS & SPONSORSHIPS

Every year, the Co-op fields hundreds of requests from local organizations looking for donations — everything from school fundraisers and neighborhood cleanups to cultural festivals and fundraisers for nonprofits. In 2025, we said “yes” to 162 of them, donating gift cards, baked goods, cash, and in-kind support to groups across Whatcom County.

We also deepened our investment in some of the community events that make Bellingham such a wonderful place to live. We were proud to sponsor Sustainable Connections' Eat Local Month, Northwest Tune-Up, WWU's Pow Wow, Senior Day in the Park, Subdued Stringband Jamboree, the MLK Day celebration, and more.



We were proud to sponsor **Pride IN Bellingham** in 2025, helping bring together thousands of people in celebration of our LGBTQIA+ community.

Purpose

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.

10% Student Discount

\$13,738

(31,373 Transactions)

Our Student Discount, valid every Wednesday, increased from 5% to 10% to help students from any college or university eat healthy, organic foods and engage with their community.

10% Smart Trips

\$12,233

(17,680 Transactions)

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

Veggie RX

\$46,563

(9,313 Transactions)

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.

WWU Food Security

\$229,860

(4,315 Transactions)

WWU Food Security Pilot identifies food-insecure students at Western Washington University and provides them with money to buy groceries, which increases retention rates.

WHEN OUR NEIGHBORS ARE IN NEED, WE LEND A HAND

Federal funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) was cut off in November, leaving roughly 3,000 Co-op customers without benefits they relied on to feed their families.

Within days, we launched a 25% discount available to anyone in our community struggling to afford groceries. Our **Lend a Hand discount** saved shoppers \$7,897, and helped bring relief to the 800+ people who used it.



"As a small, two-store cooperative grocer, we don't have deep pockets like big corporate chains; however, this is a time for all of us to step up and do everything in our power to help our community."

Lisa Sedlar
Co-op CEO/GM



We supported 221 local producers in 2025.

WHY SHOP LOCAL?

We sourced 16% of our goods from Washington state in 2025. By shopping with us, you're investing in a self-sustaining local economy and making a stand against corporate consolidation and distant shareholders. Local businesses recirculate up to four times more revenue within our community than retail chains, which directly benefits our neighbors. Your dollars support local farmers, create meaningful jobs, and strengthen our region's food system.

THE REAL FOOD SHOW

For over a decade, our Real Food Show program has combined circus arts, humor, and education to inspire kids to make healthy food choices by reaching them at school. In 2025, these talented performers delighted **2,300 children at seven elementary schools** across the region.



CREATING CONNECTIONS THROUGH COOKING

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 gather, learn life skills, and explore global flavors right in our Connections Building.



1,443 STUDENTS
26 INSTRUCTORS
21 KIDS' CLASSES
86 TOTAL CLASSES

REDUCING WASTE

Grocery stores generate waste: packaging, food scraps, damaged goods, and plenty of cardboard. Our goal is to keep as much of that out of the landfill as possible. In 2025, we **diverted 85.4% of our operational waste** through recycling and composting programs. Our largest kitchen, at our Cordata location, sends food waste to a local pig farm for feed, and any food that can't be sold or donated is composted.



BRING IT BACK

In 2024, our delis went through more than 133,000 single-use compostable utensils. In 2025, we replaced them with durable silverware and asked shoppers to do one simple thing: Bring It Back (or not!). Our single-use utensil purchases dropped 70%, saving the Co-op more than \$8,400, and keeping tens of thousands of plastic utensils out of the waste stream. The program was so successful that Skagit Valley Food Co-op started their own durable utensils program.

PLASTIC FREE JULY

For one week during Plastic Free July — a global event designed to raise awareness of plastic pollution — we removed plastic bags from our stores. This experiment helped shed light on both individual consumer habits and the role we play in enabling continued plastic consumption, and it gave us the final push to introduce compostable bags in our meat and produce departments. While we have not eliminated plastic in our stores, we continue to explore ways to minimize plastic use in collaboration with our shoppers.

SKIP THE SLIP

We print enough receipt paper to stretch 15 miles every year. Our Skip the Slip campaign invites members to opt out of paper receipts entirely. More than 400 members signed up in October alone. And for those who still want a paper receipt, ours are phenol-free, which makes them better for you and the cashiers who handle them all day. Want to participate? Scan the code or ask your cashier to join the program!



SOLAR PRODUCTION

The solar arrays on our Holly St. administrative building and our Cordata store generated a total of **75,858 kilowatt-hours** in 2025. The energy generated by our Holly St. array covered 81% of that building's energy needs.

Profit

75% 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. Member benefits include exclusive discount days, voting privileges, and much more.

\$47,832,581

TOTAL SALES

CERTIFIED ORGANIC
\$17,871,802

LOCAL
\$10,663,590

**HOUSEMADE
DELI & BAKERY**
\$5,267,036

INCOME STATEMENT

	2025	2024
Gross Sales	\$47,832,581	\$46,011,300
COGS	\$29,452,201	\$28,027,048
Gross Profit %	38.43%	39.09%
Gross Profit \$	\$18,380,380	\$17,984,252
Total Staffing Expenses	\$12,982,666	\$11,032,568
Total Operating Expenses	\$5,395,804	\$5,156,939
Interest	\$250,715	\$242,523
Pre-Tax Income	\$1,547,785	\$1,806,080
Taxes*	\$38,379	\$59,331
Net Income	\$1,509,406	\$1,746,749

*estimated



PATRONAGE DIVIDEND

When you shop at a conventional grocery store, the profits go to shareholders you'll never meet. When you shop at your Co-op, they come back to you via our Patronage Dividend. The Board of Directors determines annually if a dividend will be awarded based on profitability. When the budget allows for it, profits are returned directly to our member-owners based on how much they shopped with us during the year.

In 2025, we distributed **\$218,624 in dividends**. It's a prime example of how the cooperative model works differently: You're not just a customer here — you're an owner. And when the business does well, so do you.



Donna Nygren
Cordata Store Manager

Wynne Marks
Downtown Store Manager

Thank you for choosing your
community-owned grocery store.

CORDATA
315 Westerly Rd, Bellingham

communityfood.coop

DOWNTOWN
1220 N Forest St, Bellingham