



# Your Neighboring Food Co-ops: Locally Owned by More Than 130,000 People Like You!

The Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA) is a federation of food co-ops that are working together toward a shared vision of a thriving co-operative economy, rooted in a healthy, just and sustainable regional food system and a vibrant community of co-operative enterprise. Everyone is welcome to shop and encouraged to join!

## Who We Are

The NFCA includes more than **35 food co-ops and start-ups across New England and New York** (see map or visit [www.nfca.coop](http://www.nfca.coop)).

Our co-ops are member-owned, democratically governed grocery stores ranging from large, multiple storefront retailers to small rural community markets and start-up initiatives. **The majority of our member co-ops have been in operation for more than 30 years**, with a new wave of food co-ops opening their doors in just the past few years. Food co-ops have been innovators in the food system, and pioneers in the development of **natural, organic, local and fairly traded products** in our region, across the country and around the world.

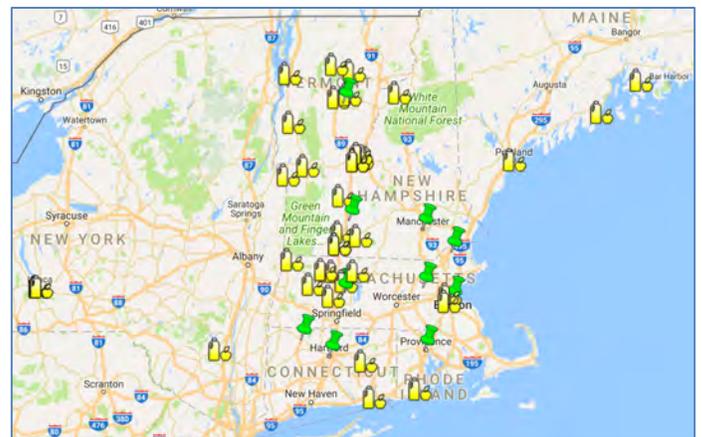
## Shared Economic Impact

The NFCA includes more than 35 food co-ops and start-up initiatives that...

- Are locally owned by more than 130,000 members,
- Generate annual revenue of \$300 million,
- Purchase more than \$60 million from local producers, and
- Employ over 2,000 people, paying annual wages of over \$49 million (2016).

An independent study completed in 2008, when the NFCA included just 17 co-ops, found that member food co-ops already had a significant impact on employment in our region. For example:

- The average wage was 18% higher for food co-op staff when compared with employees of food and beverage stores in the same states.
- Food co-ops had lower staff turnover (36%) when compared to supermarkets (59%) and more staff employed fulltime (62% compared to 43% in supermarkets).
- Taken together, member food co-ops in Vermont were among the top 25 employers in the state.



## What We're Doing

The NFCA facilitates collaboration among our member co-ops to support shared business success, communicates the impact of food co-ops on our region's food system and economy, promotes co-operative enterprise as a more sustainable and inclusive business model, and partners with likeminded organizations to advance our vision of a thriving co-operative economy.

Special initiatives include **Healthy Food Access**, facilitating access to healthy food and member-ownership for underserved communities, and innovative **Regional Sourcing** projects that seek to support our business success and increase our impact on the food system.

Following on the momentum of the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives in 2012, we are working to promote the International Co-operative Alliance's vision for a **Co-operative Decade** in which co-ops becoming the fastest growing business model by 2020 and support the contribution of the international co-operative movement to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Toward these ends, our **Go Co-op!** initiative educates consumers about co-ops and offers ways to be more involved in the co-operative movement ([nfca.coop/go](http://nfca.coop/go)).



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## Collaboration & Networks

Providing a space for collaboration and mutual support among member co-ops and start-ups is central to the work of the NFCA. Our member gatherings bring together board members and staff for opportunities to network, share skills and interact with organizational partners. Special initiatives and departmental peer networking events build community and a support system for food co-op staff and board members. We also work to support the success of our member co-ops in collaboration with organizations such as **Cooperative Fund of New England (CFNE)**, **National Co-op Bank (NCB)**, **National Co-op Grocers (NCG)**, **Food Co-op Initiative (FCI)**, and **Associated Buyers**.

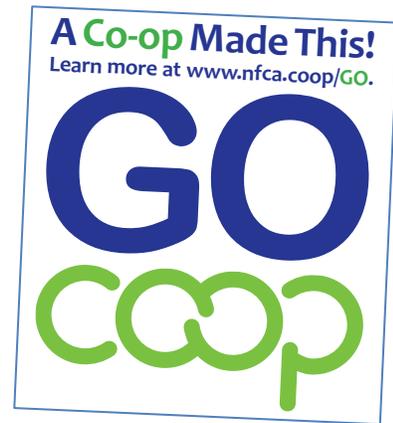
Partnership is also central to our efforts to build a healthy, just and sustainable food system across the region. As an affiliate member of the **New England Farmers Union (NEFU)**, the NFCA is committed to joining the voices of producers and consumers in seeking policies that support family farming and fisheries, and promoting co-operative enterprise as a tool for more sustainable food systems and communities. Together we have developed a curriculum on co-ops and a manual for co-operative development, and lobbied for the Farm Bill, food safety rules, and in favor of GMO labeling.



In collaboration with NEFU, CFNE and **Hunger Free Vermont**, the NFCA launched its **Food Co-ops & Healthy Food Access** initiative, making healthy, local food and co-op membership more accessible to people on limited incomes ([nfca.coop/healthyfoodaccess](http://nfca.coop/healthyfoodaccess)).

As part of our effort to build a “vibrant community of co-operative enterprise,” the NFCA is committed to **collaboration among co-ops**, working with partners such

as Cabot Creamery Co-op, Deep Root Organic Co-op, Organic Valley, Real Pickles and the **Valley Alliance of Worker Co-ops** to promote the co-operative movement in our region. The NFCA is a founding member of the **Valley Co-operative Business Association**, a cross sector federation of co-ops in western MA and southern VT, and is working with the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA CLUSA) to promote local models for collaboration across the country ([vcba.coop](http://vcba.coop)).



## Education & Co-operation

The NFCA's **Go Co-op** initiative provides tools for our member food co-ops to educate consumers about the role of co-operative enterprise across our food system and economy. Shelf tags (above) identify products supplied by co-ops, supported by an online list of co-op suppliers and other ways that people can use co-operatives to improve their lives and communities. The logo incorporates the International Co-operative Alliance's “Co-operative Marque” to support greater awareness of the co-op identity and links to efforts by NCBA CLUSA to raise the profile of co-ops across the economy ([nfca.coop/go](http://nfca.coop/go)).

The NFCA is a member of the **University of Massachusetts Co-operative Enterprise Collaborative** and works closely with partners including the Valley Alliance of Worker Co-ops and the Economics Department at UMASS Amherst to develop a *Certificate in Applied Research on Co-operative Enterprise*. The certificate includes an internship component for students interested in hands-on experience in co-op enterprise. As part of the program, NFCA executive director Erbin Crowell teaches an “Introduction to the Co-operative Movement,” engaging students with co-op history, philosophy and practice, and guest speakers from local co-ops.

## Board of Directors & Staff

The NFCA is a co-operative federation of food co-ops. Our work is guided by the shared vision of our member co-ops and overseen by an elected board of directors. Our staff includes Erbin Crowell, Executive Director, and Bonnie Hudspeth, Member Programs Manager.