

## OCA Board Member Profile



**Shylah Wolfe, Director**  
**Representing Local Food and Farm Co-operatives**

- 1. Tell us a bit about yourself (i.e., your background (where you grew up, education, children, which co-operative you work for, your position, etc.)**

I grew up in Southwestern Ontario - rural and agricultural area. I went to McMaster University for a BA in Psychology and University of Saskatchewan for a Masters Certificate in Co-ops and the Social Economy from the School of Public Policy. I also have a Red Seal in Culinary Arts. Currently, I work for Local Food and Farm Co-operative as Project Manager, wherein I perform the general executive duties of running the co-op and support the needs of the Northern and Southern coordinators who work with food and farm co-ops in their regions / communities.

- 2. How long have you been involved in the co-operative movement, and what do you love most about it?**

I have been working directly with co-operatives for eight years. I got involved with co-operatives through food, as a caterer and chef for an art-focused community co-op cafe. Since then I have become involved in a handful of food based co-operatives, particularly multi-stakeholder co-ops.

What I love most about co-operatives is the potential the model possesses to disrupt and democratize local economies.

**3. If there is one thing you would want people to know about co-ops, what would it be?**

That members have the power in the organization.

**4. Why is your co-operative a member of OCA?**

We are a member because we highly value the principles of education and co-operation amongst co-operatives.

**5. What do you think are some of the benefits of being a member of OCA?**

Benefits would include access to co-operative development resources and to privileged communication with the provincial government.

**6. Why did you decide to join the OCA board as a Director?**

I joined the Board to learn from the leaders in the co-operative sector and to advocate for food and farm co-operatives!

**7. How has your past experience helped you in this role?**

I have learned from many other co-operatives how varied governance weaknesses and strengths can be between different Boards. I believe I have taken the best of lessons from those differences to understand the pitfalls, to avoid and core competencies required for good board governance.

**8. What do you think are some of the opportunities and challenges facing OCA in the next 3 - 5 years?**

I would say that the opportunities lie in advocating and preparing a generation for co-operative conversion in succession planning of SMEs, as boomers age out of the labour market / business.

**9. What is your vision for OCA?**

My vision is to assist civil society (through policy advocacy and education) in a transformation of the economy towards people and planet over profits.

**10. Share a fun/silly thing that not many people know about you!**

I have gone skydiving over a glacier in New Zealand!