

INFORMATION ON THE CO-OPERATIVE SECTOR

The Ontario Co-operative Association, represents over 1,500 co-operative enterprises in the province of Ontario. Co-operatives are a *different* kind of business model that is driven by people, planet and profit. They are rooted in collective and community ownership and prosperity.

Co-operatives in Ontario:

- 57,000 direct and indirect jobs
- \$3.3 billion in income created for Ontarians
- \$6 billion in value add created in the economy
- \$1.3 billion generated for government services
- 49,000 volunteers
- The oldest co-ops in Ontario, Vineland Growers Co-operative and Guelph Campus Co-operative, were formed in 1913 and still operate today
- Twice as many co-ops remain in business after 10 years as other business enterprises

Some of Ontario's most successful co-operatives:

- The Co-operators insurance company is our largest member, founded in 1945
- The 167 credit unions in Ontario earn \$1.4 billion in revenue annually
- In the agricultural sector, Gay Lea Foods Co-operative, Growmark and Hensall District Co-operative have all operated for over sixty years in rural Ontario
- There are over 500 housing co-operatives in Ontario, providing 44,000 units at an operational cost below non-profit housing with one third of members paying a monthly charge geared to income
- Over 130 co-ops operate in health care and social assistance providing solutions to many groups of marginalized Ontarians
- Retail co-operatives like Mountain Equipment Co-operative (MEC), The Big Carrot grocery store and Urbane Cyclist contribute over \$300,000 million in revenue to the province

LEAD, CULTIVATE AND CONNECT

Co-operatives are a *different* kind of business model that are driven by people, planet and profit. The Ontario Co-operative Association (OCA) supports, develops, educates and advocates for Ontario's 1,500+ co-operative businesses.

CO-OPERATIVE SUCCESS STORIES

1.

Stocksy

Technological Innovation: Platform Co-operatives

Stocksy is a great Canadian example of Platform Cooperativism in action. Many photographers have trouble making a living by selling photos online because large distribution companies like Getty Images only give them pennies per use. Getty Images shareholders take the lions' share of the income while the photographers take home only a fraction of the money paid by the buyer. Stocksy United turns this model on its head. Photographers become members of the cooperative and sell their stock photographs through a common platform. A portion of every sale pays for the development of the technology and the marketing of the company. The rest, the majority of the sale, goes to the photographer. This model can be applied to other creative fields. Platform co-operatives provide an opportunity for freelancers to collectively market their work online and earn a real living. For more information visit Stocksy.com.

2.

TREC

Energy Innovation: Renewable Energy Co-operatives

Renewable energy co-operatives like TREC offer a proven solution to fight climate change in Ontario. They ensure local control over rising energy costs, with the advantage of significant investment and job growth in the community. Community members invest to build the renewable energy infrastructure that feeds their homes and businesses using the co-operative model to ensure fair local ownership. For more information visit www.trec.on.ca.

3.

Health Care Innovation: Health Care Co-operatives

Cooperative innovation can help to meet one of the great challenges facing our health care system – addressing the growing demand that comes with Ontario's aging population. The availability of Personal Care Workers or PSWs is a particular concern with a cooperative solution. A new cooperative is in development at an Ontario college where the workers or PSWs will own their own cooperative business – one that will ensure patients are well cared for and workers earn a living wage. This model can be seen in an American example with a Women's health care co-operative that has been running since 1985. For more information visit www.chcany.org.

4.

Y's Owl Maclure
CO-OPERATIVE CENTRE

Social Innovation: Disabled Worker Co-operatives

Y's Owl Maclure is a worker co-operative for members with disabilities. It gives their members a voice in the organization and operation of the business. Y's Owl has 240 members, serving 400 people with disabilities including autism in the Ottawa region. Service revenue is collected, in part, through café and social enterprise sales that substantially augment government funding. Disabled workers receive qualifications through training, enter the workforce as productive citizens and graduate to independent living. Learn more at www.ysowlmaclure.org.

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