



**MEDIA RELEASE
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COVID Fund supports Ontario's co-operative businesses in the wake of the pandemic

GUELPH, ON – July 9, 2020 – Thirty Seven co-operatives across the province recently received a total of \$20,000 in funds from the Ontario Co-operative Association (OCA), to help them adapt and rebuild from COVID-19, thanks to a generous initiative by The Co-operators.

In May, The Co-operators announced a \$200,000 COVID-19 Co-operative Assistance Fund, to provide provincial co-operative associations like OCA with access to financial support (to a maximum of \$20,000). OCA used the money to address the impacts of COVID-19 on our co-operative members and their members, ultimately helping to rebuild a vibrant co-operative sector.

Said Paul Hanna, Executive Vice-President, The Co-operators: "Like so many Canadian businesses, many co-ops are facing immense challenges in delivering the products and services that bring value to all Canadians. Through this relief fund, we're lending a helping hand to other co-operatives, upholding a movement that is designed to support the collective resilience of our communities."

Of the thirty nine organizations that applied to OCA's COVID Fund, 37 qualified to receive varying levels of support, based on their needs. Successful applicants included: 11 housing co-operatives, 19 daycare centres, three worker co-operatives, one social co-operative, one consumer co-operative, one producer co-operative and one platform co-operative.

Funding to these co-operatives will assist them with the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment, other equipment and/or software, and some structural changes, in order to make their businesses safer and more viable during and after COVID-19.

"We are thankful we are able to support our members during these challenging times because of the generosity of The Co-operators' Co-operative Assistance Fund," says Erin Morgan, Executive Director, OCA. "Inherent in this initiative are the co-operative principles of 'Co-operation among Co-operatives' and 'Concern for Community' – two values that make co-operatives so unique in the world of business. OCA is proud to be part of this collaborative movement."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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ABOUT THE ONTARIO CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION (OCA): Co-operatives are a different kind of business model that are driven by people, planet and profit. OCA supports, develops, educates and advocates for Ontario's 1,500+ co-operative businesses. We exist to strengthen and unite the co-operative movement and we believe that co-operatives are the solution to creating stronger communities, which help to build a better world. Visit us at www.ontario.coop for more information.

ABOUT THE CO-OPERATORS: The Co-operators Group Limited is a Canadian co-operative with more than \$47.4 billion in assets under administration. Through its group of companies, it offers home, auto, life, group, travel, commercial and farm insurance, as well as investment products. The Co-operators is well known for its community involvement and its commitment to sustainability. The Co-operators is ranked as a Corporate Knights' Best 50 Corporate Citizen in Canada and listed among the Best Employers in Canada by Kincentric (formerly AON). For more information, visit www.cooperators.ca.