

Shareable Facts about Ontario's Co-operative Sector

- ✓ There are an estimated **1,500+** co-operatives (financial and non-financial) in Ontario, operating in 1,900 locations and in 400 communities across the province.
- ✓ Co-operatives create **\$3.3 billion** in income for Ontarians and generate **\$1.3 billion** for government services.
- ✓ The sector is owned by more than **1.4 million members** and is supported by 49,000 volunteers.
- ✓ More than **one in ten** Ontarians is a member of a co-operative or credit union.
- ✓ Co-operative businesses span a diversity of products and services across a range of business sectors including: agriculture, finance, insurance, childcare, healthcare, housing, food production and sale, tourism, transportation, retail, renewable energy, social services, entertainment and culture, and even funeral services!
- ✓ **They are sustainable** - twice as many co-operatives remain in business after 10 years of operation as compared to other types of business enterprises.
- ✓ Co-operatives are based on a tried and tested, solid economic business model — they have existed in Canada for over **100** years!
- ✓ Vineland Growers Co-operative and the Guelph Campus Co-operative are the two oldest co-ops in Ontario – they were formed in 1913 and still operate today!
- ✓ **Co-operatives invest in people and communities**, as member-owned and operated (for profit and not-for-profit) businesses, organized to meet a common need, and encourage member economic participation.
- ✓ Co-operatives are structured on the basic principle of democracy, with a "one member one vote" system, open and voluntary membership and democratic member control. There are **10,000** board members in the co-operative sector!
- ✓ **Co-operatives foster local economic development and prosperity**, as revenues are reinvested into the business, put back into the community, or shared among its members.
- ✓ Co-operatives fulfil gaps or needs for specific products and services within a community that are not provided by other businesses. Their primary objective is to maintain access to the product or service they supply.

- ✓ Co-operatives operate on a **"triple bottom line" values-based system**, with economic, social and environmental goals underlying their business structure.
- ✓ Co-operatives are an ideal service delivery option in the social economy. They can operate in conjunction with government to provide much-needed social services in a way that is highly responsive to the community — specifically because they are owned and operated by the members who reside in the community.
- ✓ Co-operatives can deliver social services at a lower cost than the private sector.
- ✓ **Co-operatives are solution providers.** They have a proven track record of finding innovative and economic ways of dealing with challenges in their communities.
- ✓ Co-operatives share many values and goals with government — democratic participation, job creation and growth, fiscal accountability and transparency, social and economic development, efficient delivery of services and public-private partnerships.
- ✓ Co-operatives are well-suited to help meet policy challenges and government priorities that serve the needs of communities throughout Ontario.



To learn more about Ontario
co-operatives and co-operatives in
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