



**CO-OP**  
CINCY

# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Co-op Cincy • 215 E 14th Street • Cincinnati, OH 45202  
[www.coopcincy.org](http://www.coopcincy.org) • 513.549.3381

# STAFF NOTE

What an exciting year we've had! Our family of worker owned businesses has expanded in some powerful ways internationally, nationally, and locally.

Our team at Co-op Cincy is working to support and launch worker owned businesses across the region. We are actively seeking established businesses that wish to transition to worker ownership, assisting motivated individuals interested in launching new businesses, and offering existing co-ops ongoing business consulting.

Our team provides individual co-ops strategic planning, financing, sales, and marketing consulting, to help insure their businesses become a flourishing part of our communities. Most importantly, the worker-owned businesses nationally and internationally are supporting one another through economic downturns and business successes. This interconnectedness is a fundamental tenet of our co-op network, ensuring we are building an economy that works for everyone.



If you are looking for a way to make a meaningful impact on the vibrancy and resilience of your community, please join our efforts! Across our family of worker owners, diverse groups of people are coming together to build and grow democratically managed businesses. There are many ways for you to get involved. Email us [info@coopcincy.org](mailto:info@coopcincy.org) or call us (513) 549-3381 for more information.



# CLEANING CO-OP

A group of immigrant workers, both men and women, have joined together to create the worker-owned Cincy Cleaning Co-op! The co-op launched in November of 2019, but preparation began a year earlier with support from Cincy Co-op. As workers within a co-op, they are required to attend bi-weekly meetings and training to ensure they meet the quality customer service and cleaning standards set by the group. Once they complete training, they receive a wage increase. The meetings also help them manage their needs, such as coordinating transportation and how to organize their work more effectively.

The fruits of these meetings are made evident by their flexibility with customers and competitively priced quality service. Once fully established, the



CINCY  
CLEANING  
CO-OP

Cincy Cleaning Co-op plans to expand their team and the types of cleaning services they offer.

Currently, their focus is to expand their area of service. The Cincy Cleaning Co-op team is excited about this new business as a way to lift each other up and have more control over their lives and living standards. Learn more about this impressive group at [facebook.com/cincinnatiCLEANINGcoop/](https://facebook.com/cincinnatiCLEANINGcoop/).

## YOVANY'S STORY

I used to work in landscaping and gardening, and it was very different. In large companies, the people at the top only care about the work. They do not care about the workers. For example, if you get sick for a day or two and you don't work, you are let go.

Here at Sustainergy, we work together: Flequer, Lindsey, and the rest of the team. They understand if you're sick and need to stay home for a day. I finally feel secure, because I know my team supports me.

As a worker, each one of us has an opportunity. For example, where I am from in Honduras, we have cooperatives that help people. Seeing their success encourages you to become a part of it.

Being an owner of the company gives you more reasons to work harder. Because if you work harder you know that it is a benefit for you and your team, and it becomes a motivation for you to give more of yourself.

The Co-op Cincy network is important because there are a lot of people here who have worked a long time at other companies and have never had the opportunity to receive the support we get from each other in the cooperative.

» Yovany pictured with Georgina Vera, the youngest member of the Co-op Cincy team



# 2019 SYMPOSIUM

Co-op Cincy held our fourth Union Co-op Symposium with the 1Worker1Vote national network, for 200+ social entrepreneurs, labor organizers, co-op workers and community development practitioners. Sixteen states were represented along with 4 countries – the UK, Spain, Canada, and Mexico, to learn about practical tools for starting and running union worker cooperatives and networks. The diversity of both people and ideas was inspiring.

An inspiring story came from Humberto Montes de Oca from the Mexican Electricians Union. He described their successful movement to take back numerous utility plants as worker-owned companies.

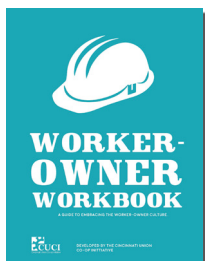


## CO-OP U

Co-op U teams spent 8 weeks testing their business models through customer interviews and exploration of the feasibility of their plans through financial modeling. They learned the ins and outs of co-ops and building a strong co-op culture as each week progressed. Several Co-op U graduates include:

- » Olive Tree, an existing catering company owned by a group of Syrian refugee women who are working to transition their business into a worker co-op.
- » Queen City Commons, a composting co-op led by two young women.

## CO-OP RESOURCES



Our Worker-Owner Workbook teaches the essentials of the union co-op model, nuts and bolts of business financials, conflict management and team building skills. If you want to learn more about the union co-op movement the workbook is available for purchase on our website!



We are now offering a Mondragon Principles card game on our website! Visit our 'Resources' page to learn more about how they were created through the LISTEN Project partnership.

# OUR WORK



## BUSINESS ANALYSIS & PLANNING

Guide businesses and startups through the process of creating a co-op from concept to launch



## NETWORKING & SOURCING

Attract and secure people and money to launch and grow union co-ops



## POPULAR EDUCATION & CULTURE

Develop curricula, training, & events to teach workers about running a community-minded co-op business.



### WHAT WE'VE DONE

- » **Completed four rounds of Co-op U**, a 12-week training that takes teams through the steps to validate their idea and launch a co-op business.
- » **Launched 2 new co-ops:** CareShare – a nanny share co-op in the child care sector – and the immigrant led Cincinnati Cleaning Co.

### WHERE WE'RE GOING

- » **Co-op U:** Hold 2-3 sessions with a special focus on our refugee communities and our first online course.
- » Support and expand CC's existing **Women Led Co-ops** in child care, cleaning, catering, and compost and help create new women led co-ops.
- » **Conversions/Manufacturing:** Expand awareness; dig in to acquisitions; and utilize WIOA funds to help local manufacturing companies transition to their workers.



### WHAT WE'VE DONE

- » Helped restructure Our Harvest's debt through our membership in the Seed Commons financial co-op, enabling Our Harvest to survive and emerge much stronger.
- » **Cooperative Capital Loan Fund:** made 7 loans totaling \$85K to CC co-ops and continued building the infrastructure, securing funding for a full time loan officer.
- » **4th Biennial Union Co-op Symposium** – brought together 200+ people from across the country and around the world for a 2-day conference on union co-op development.

### WHERE WE'RE GOING

- » **Launch the Co-op Cincy Business Advisory Board** composed of local business experts and retired business owners to help guide our conversion work and mentor new and existing co-ops
- » **Local Loan Fund:** Continue building the infrastructure, including increasing local funding.
- » Convene local partners in a **Broadening Ownership Coalition**, building support through a **Delegation to Mondragon**, and working to **pass legislation** to further co-op development in Cincinnati.



### WHAT WE'VE DONE

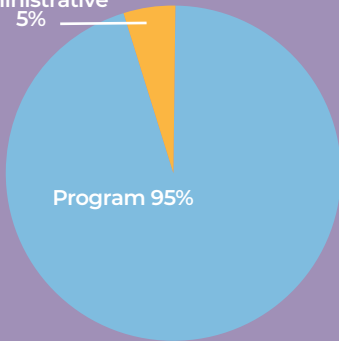
- » Sold 250 **Worker-Owner Workbooks**, our union co-op culture development and financial literacy book.
- » Founded the **Inter Co-op Digital Marketing Committee:** Co-op Cincy's existing co-ops are joining forces to develop a cross co-op marketing strategy and improve each co-op's marketing skills.

### WHERE WE'RE GOING

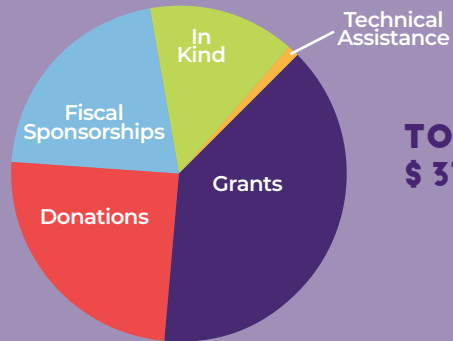
- » **Technical Assistance:** Increase fee-based TA which utilizes CC's direct experience and original co-op development curriculum to help communities across the country jump start their own union co-op networks.
- » **New Co-op Education Materials:** To increase access to co-op development and culture building education, CC will develop a Facilitator Guide for the Worker Owner Workbook, a Facilitator Guide and Participant Manual for Co-op U, and will work to translate these resources into Spanish.

# FINANCIALS

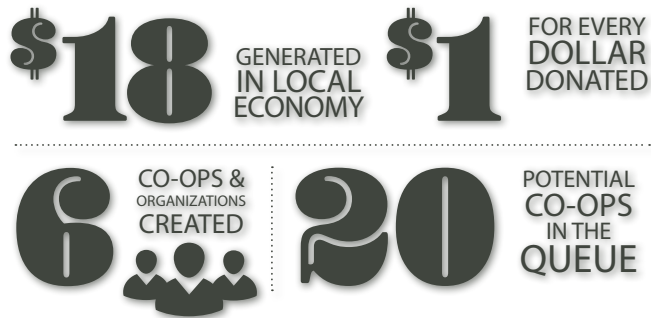
Administrative  
5%



**TOTAL EXPENSES**



**TOTAL INCOME  
\$ 378,000**



## TRANSFORMATIVE FUNDERS

1Worker1Vote  
Greater Cincinnati Foundation  
Christ Church Cathedral  
Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr./  
U.S. Bank Foundation  
Seed Commons Cooperative  
Peter Block

## SOLIDARITY SPONSORS

Open Society Foundation	Development Fund
Ruth & Robert Conway Foundation	Shumaker Loop and Kendrick
National Cooperative Bank	Laborers International Union of North America Local 265
United Steelworkers Cooperative Development Foundation	IBEW local 212 Ohio Employee Ownership Center
PNC Foundation	Congregation of Divine Providence
ICA Group	Co-op Dayton
Community Shares Shared Capital Cooperative	IUE-CWA
Brueggeman Center for Dialogue (Xavier University)	United Food and Commercial Workers
Cincinnati AFL-CIO	First Financial Bank
Cincinnati	Meshewa Farm Foundation



Left to right: Maria Dienger, Ellen Vera, Kristen Barker, Andrés Contreras

## STAFF

**Kristen Barker**, *Executive Director*

**Ellen Vera**, *Director of Development & Co-op Organizing*

**Mary Steele**, *Bookkeeper*

**Andrés Contreras**, *Financial Analyst & Co-op Business Developer*

**Maria Dienger**, *Communications Coordinator*

## BOARD

**Katy Heins**, *Chair*

**Kristen Barker**, *President*

**Flequer Vera**, *Vice Chair*

**Ellen Vera**, *Secretary*

**Cynthia Pinchback Hines**, *Education Chair*

**Don Barker**, *Fundraising Chair*

**Phil Amadon**, *Labor Council Delegate*

**Pete McLinden**,

*Cincinnati AFL-CIO*

**Gary Hines**, *NAACP of Hamilton/Fairfield/West Chester and Liberty Townships*

**Jaime Love**, *Institute for Sustainable Communities*

**Dave McLean**, *USW*



1worker1vote is building a national network of hybrid, shared ownership, regional and municipal ecosystems starting with unionized

worker-owned cooperative businesses to overcome structural inequalities of opportunity, mobility, and income. Building pathways out of poverty leading to pathways toward prosperity.