



2018 Annual Report

Cincinnati Union Co-op Initiative

Cincinnati Union Cooperative Initiative • 215 E 14th Street • Cincinnati, OH 45202
www.cincinnatiunioncoop.org • 513.549.3381

Staff Note

Some might ask, how can we remain hopeful when so many of us are coping with housing instability, rising wealth inequality, and the day-to-day impacts of oppression? While this continued legacy of injustice disturbs us greatly, we gain energy by working in solidarity with local people and organizations committed to building wealth from the ground up.

More concretely, across our family of cooperative businesses, diverse groups of people have joined forces to build and grow businesses owned and democratically managed by the workers and the community. Throughout each co-op's growth, CUCI accompanies the community and workers in all stages of developing their business and co-op culture. This includes meeting with all of our cooperatives on a weekly basis, facilitating access to non-extractive financing, accelerating their development through Co-op U, and more.



At a glance, our efforts may seem small, but together we are strong. It takes social movements of all kinds, including the worker-owned co-op movement, to create an economy that works for all. Join us, and together we will build the solidarity economy!

~The CUCI Staff
Kristen, Ellen, Christina, Andres & Maria



The solidarity city graphic from our new Mondragon Principles card game was created through The LISTEN project, a partnership between Caroline Woolard, artist, Wave Pool and Contemporary Arts Center (CAC), curators and producers, and Mary Clare Rietz, community liaison. Coloring done by CUCI.

Childcare

This year CUCI dove into child care co-op organizing! With partners Cincinnati Federation of Teachers and the Amos Project, we formed the People for Early Child (P4EC) coalition. P4EC brings together parents, educators, and early childhood business owners and directors to advocate for more equitable early childhood system. CUCI is working to bring two co-ops to life in this sector, which relies predominantly on women of color:

CareShare: a worker-owned cooperative child care business that uses innovative web-based matchmaking (designed by TechSolidarity out of Silicon Valley) to bring together parents and teachers to care for up to five children in a family home. Care Share provides personalized early education for more children, and ensures teachers are paid at least \$15/hour with benefits.

Shared Services: brings together owners and directors of existing child care businesses in a cooperative to share best practices, and strengthen their businesses through



access to substitute teachers, and increased buying power for insurance, food and supplies.

We ended the year showcasing the growing capacity of our organization and knowledge of the sector by publishing a 170-page report, Strategies Towards Wage Equity in Early Childhood, for Cincinnati Preschool Promise.

Zeke's Story

My name is Zeke Coleman, and I am proud to be a worker-owner with Our Harvest Cooperative. Working at one of CUCI's co-ops has made a huge difference in my life. Before I came to Our Harvest, I worked for five years in a local food-processing plant. Even though I trained new workers, they would be the ones promoted, instead of me. The company started using reduction techniques with the people of color, which meant that the company made work terrible for us.

Since joining Our Harvest, I am no longer stressed at work or discriminated against as a Black man. In fact, it's the opposite. At OHC, I was just promoted to the Food Hub Coordinator position after 5 years within the packing, delivery, and sales operations there. The opportunities to learn new skills and receive training in a variety of jobs within the co-op prepared me to step up into the coordinator role.

CUCI has helped us create our own family-sustaining jobs and learn important skills, like understanding the finances of our business and how to analyze key elements of our operations. They have also helped us create a culture of real, deep respect and cooperation. I feel so good about the people I work with.



Apple Street Market

Apple Street is thrilled that NEST, Northside's community development corporation, purchased the future home of Apple Street Market in November of 2018 with dollars made possible by the City of Cincinnati's CDBG funds.

This building will be a long-term community asset. While the transfer of the property has taken longer than expected, it paves the way for construction to begin on the worker-and community-owned grocery that will come to life in a food desert. Fundraising for working capital can now begin in earnest.

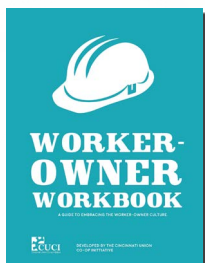


Kristen and Andres pictured above at The Working World's annual financial cooperative peer loan fund retreat.

Loan Fund

In 2017, CUCI became a member of The Working World's Financial Cooperative, to create a local loan fund to capitalize our co-ops utilizing non-extractive finance principles including no repayment on the loans until our co-ops are profitable. Tapping into national dollars, CUCI's Loan Fund gave its first loan to Sustainergy for expansion into new product lines at the end of 2017. This year, thanks to a generous contribution from Christ Church Cathedral, we raised \$50,000 to capitalize the local fund and approved loans for three Our Harvest Co-op (OHC) worker-owners to buy their cooperative membership shares.

New Resources!



This is the 5th annual report for the Cincinnati Union Co-op Initiative (CUCI). 2017 was a year of achievement and challenge – important progress for individual co-ops in Cincinnati, and growth of the co-op movement in or region and nation.



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 established 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 Building

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



What We've Done

- Completed two 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.
- Hired a new team member to explore how to raise wages in the childcare sector through childcare and shared service co-ops.

Where We're Going

- **Co-op U:** hold 2-3 sessions focusing on our immigrant communities and our first online course.
- **CareShare & Shared Services:** launch matchmaking platform with TechSolidarity and a Phase II Prototype. Launch 2-3 products for existing child care business owners.
- **Conversions/Manufacturing:** conduct succession planning landscape assessment for Greater Cincinnati.

What We've Done

- Helped secure Apple Street Market financing, unlocking over \$4 million for construction to begin in early 2019.
- Attracted national grant spotlights on our child care work & partnered with a tech group in Silicon Valley to create the beginning of a childcare matching platform.
- Formed a Working World local peer network loan fund, raised over \$50K, and disbursed our first loans to two co-ops in our network.

Where We're Going

- **Local Loan Fund:** continue building the infrastructure, including increasing funding for our local loan officer position.
- **CUCI Internal Infrastructure:** strengthen our ability to create and support union worker co-ops by continuing to build and diversify CUCI's funding sources and systems.
- **1Worker1Vote National Infrastructure and Symposium:** bring together 250+ people from across the country and world, and formalize the governance structure of the national network.



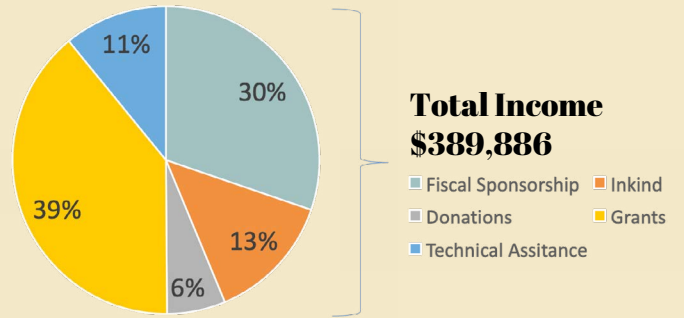
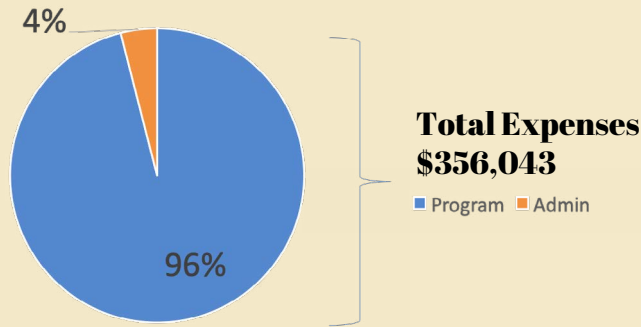
What We've Done

- Sold over 150 Worker-Owner Workbooks, our union co-op culture development and financial literacy book.
- Helped to develop and move forward the 1worker1vote.org Community College Curriculum to make the co-op development process more available to people across the country.

Where We're Going

- **Technical Assistance:** *NEW* Individualized fee-based TA utilizes CUCI's direct experience and original co-op development curriculum to help communities across the country jump start their own union co-op networks.
- **Interco-op Culture Building:** As CUCI's cooperative network builds, we are focusing on strengthening relationships and intercooperation among our co-ops.

Financials



\$18 GENERATED IN LOCAL ECONOMY **\$1** FOR EVERY DOLLAR DONATED

5 CO-OPS & ORGANIZATIONS CREATED **20** POTENTIAL CO-OPS IN THE QUEUE



Staff

Kristen Barker, Executive Director
Ellen Vera, Director of Development & Co-op Organizing
Christina Brown, Project Manager
Andres Contreras, Financial Analyst
Maria Dienger, Communications Coordinator
Mary Steele, Bookkeeper

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CIO	IBEW Local 212
GBBN	Steve Sleigh

We deeply appreciate the support of our sustaining donors. Check out our website for a list of sustaining donors, our 2018 award-winners and a little about their amazing work!



1worker1vote.org and Mondragon International North America are building a national network of unionized worker-owned cooperative businesses to overcome inequality of opportunity, mobility, and income.