

For Immediate Release

OTF grant to help create sixty new co-operatives across Ontario

GUELPH, ON. May 6, 2016. Thanks to a significant grant of \$486,500 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), the Ontario Co-operative Association (On Co-op) will be able to impact thousands of community members directly and indirectly across the province, through the creation of sixty new co-operative enterprises.

On April 28, Local MPP Liz Sandals and OTF Grant Review Team member David Murray, came to the On Co-op office in Guelph, to personally congratulate the Association's Executive Director, Erin Morgan and staff team, and to learn more about how the two-year grant will support and strengthen the Ontario co-operative movement.

The objective of the Fund is to help develop healthy and vibrant communities across the province of Ontario. Notes MPP Sandals: *"Co-operatives have proven to be an excellent way to create jobs and build community in a wide variety of sectors. The grant will allow On Co-op to enhance and expand the valuable services they provide to co-op enterprises and entrepreneurs."*

On Co-op plans to use the funding to:

1. Expand their co-operative business networks from six to nine regions within the province, which will enable On Co-op to provide region-specific assistance to area co-operatives. Evidence shows that business survival rates increase when enterprises engage actively in these networks. It is anticipated that it will catalyze the creation of sixty new co-operative enterprises and depending on the model, will impact thousands of community members directly and indirectly.
2. Enhance the services provided by Ontario's 125 business development organizations. By integrating co-op specific resources into these organizations' services, they will be better equipped to support the growth of co-operative enterprises and respond to the needs of community-focused entrepreneurs.

"Co-operatives are all about strengthening communities and serving the needs of their member-owners. Our "triple bottom line" approach (i.e., organizations that adopt a social, environmental and financial framework) respects people and the planet, while making a profit that goes back to the members and the community. Many Ontarians are still unaware of the vital role that co-ops play in our economy and society, but with this support from Trillium, we hope to remedy that situation," says Peter Cameron, Co-op Development Manager with On Co-op.

On Co-op would like to take this opportunity to extend a very big thank you to MPP Liz Sandals, the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ontario Provincial Government, for this incredible opportunity and support the Fund is providing for the development of co-operative businesses across Ontario.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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The leading grant-making foundation in Canada, the **Ontario Trillium Foundation** strengthens the capacity of the voluntary sector through investments in community-based initiatives. An agency of the Government of Ontario, OTF builds healthy and vibrant communities. Visit www.otf.ca.

The **Ontario Co-operative Association** believes that co-operatives build a better world. We are the trade association and capacity-building organization that develops, engages, educates and advocates for Ontario's 1,300 co-operative businesses. On Co-op is an information and resources network with a mission to *lead, cultivate and connect co-operatives*. Visit www.ontario.coop. facebook.com/oncoop. twitter.com/ontariocoops.