



# MARIPOSA FOOD CO-OP MEMBER HANDBOOK

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# Welcome to Mariposa!

So, what exactly have you just become a part of?

To answer that question, let's start by looking at our roots. We've changed a lot over the decades, based on our members' work and vision. Mariposa Food Co-op began as a small buying club in the 1960's, and gradually transformed into a storefront where members could purchase products off the shelf as well as by bulk order. The Co-op used to be open only a few days a week, and many members had to use keys to get into the store to do their workshifts. There were only three or four staff members, and all decisions were made by the general membership.

Until recently, only a few hundred people regularly used the Co-op. Mariposa mainly relied on word of mouth to attract new members. Everybody knew everybody, and the community using the Co-op was pretty insular. Over the past several years, however, we have worked to expand our open hours and increase the visibility and accessibility of the Co-op. In turn, we have experienced a dramatic growth spurt. Since 2006 alone, the membership and staff have tripled.

Mariposa Food Co-op is not just another business. We are owned and operated by our members, the people who shop here, who share equally in the Co-op's funding, governance, and daily store operations. Because of Mariposa's uniqueness, becoming a member requires some learning. This handbook will serve as a reference to help you make the most of your membership.

Thank you for joining!

## MARIPOSA'S MISSION

Mariposa is organized according to the principles of the international cooperative movement (see appendix) to provide residents of West Philadelphia and beyond with access to and information about food, especially healthy, locally-grown or otherwise sustainably-produced products. Our primary activity is running a food co-op owned by those who shop there, who actively participate in its governance and operations on an egalitarian consensus-seeking basis.

## STATEMENT OF INTENT

Mariposa strives to be a place that welcomes everyone without bias. We welcome people of every ethnicity, culture, gender identity, sexual persuasion, ability, and economic class. The unusual nature of the Co-op and of how one shops here (being different from a standard grocery store) requires a specific kind of knowledge—the product of an initial period of learning. Some people are already familiar with food cooperatives—in their case, there may be relatively little to learn. However, there are plenty of people for whom the concept of buying food as part of a cooperative is foreign.

As a place to which only members have access and where one need possess a special knowledge to understand what is going on, the Co-op can resemble an exclusive club to non-members. Mariposa can be alienating, though we strive to be accepting. We ask that members be mindful of this whenever they are in the store and be ready and willing to talk to new and potential members about Mariposa or direct them to one of the staff members who can do so.

## THE PROPERTY

Mariposa owns 4726 Baltimore Ave, where we are located. In addition to the store floor and our basement overstock area, the Co-op uses a portion of the 2nd floor for office and meeting space. We rent the remaining 2nd and 3rd floor rooms as office/studio space. Mariposa is responsible for the upkeep of the building.

# Membership

## BENEFITS & RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

At Mariposa, one active membership entitles you to the following:

- one shopping account
- one primary shopper (the equity holder and person responsible for the account)
- one (optional) additional proxy shopper (someone with whom you share food/food costs who is permitted to shop on your account)
- bulk-ordering privileges (providing adherence with the balance, workshift, and bulk order policies)
- \$5 in credit privileges for your first six months of membership
- (optional) extended credit privileges of \$25, available by request after six months of membership in good standing
- one key for after-hours access, available by request after six months of membership in good standing
- one voice/one vote in decision making at all general membership meetings
- one workshift (2 hours every 4 weeks, on average, totalling 26 hrs/year)
- one capital investment of \$100 (your member equity) that you must pay at least \$20 of upon joining, and \$20 each Fall thereafter until the \$100 ceiling is reached
- one set of dues (\$40 annually), billed automatically to your account in monthly installments of \$3.33

**Additionally, all new members and their proxy shoppers must attend a New Member Orientation.**

## MULTIPLE MEMBERSHIP ACCOUNTS

If you share a one-membership account with another adult and frequently spend in excess of \$80 per week at the Co-op, we ask that you add another membership to your account. The responsibilities and privileges associated with an account increase proportionally by the number of memberships on it. Therefore, on an account with two memberships, the member equity would be \$200, dues would be \$6.66 per month, the workshift requirement would be 52 hours/year, credit privileges would start at \$10, the account

would be eligible for two keys, and so on. Adding additional memberships is also a way to add more shoppers to your account.

**Please note that it is not the Co-op's responsibility to track individuals' purchases or contributions to equity on a shared account.**

## MEMBER EQUITY & DUES

Your member equity is your capital investment in the Co-op. It goes to the purchasing of our inventory and is completely refundable upon your departure from the Co-op, providing you are in good standing and do not owe workshift hours or have an unpaid balance on your account.

Dues go to cover a portion of our operating costs. They are your membership "fee" and are not refundable.

## YOUR MESS ACCOUNT

When you join the Co-op (if you provide us with an e-mail address) you will receive an email with a link to MESS (the Mariposa Electronic Storage System). MESS is an online database tied to our cashiering system that allows you to view your Mariposa account online. Once you are logged in, you can view your workshift history, upcoming shifts, shopping transactions, account balance, and member equity. You can also update your contact information.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LOA)

If you will be away from the Co-op for more than a month, you can arrange a leave of absence. Your departure and return dates must be established with staff. Taking a leave of absence is an agreement with the Co-op that you will not be shopping during that time and will not be expected to do work shifts or pay dues. Your leave of absence may last no longer than six months.

## DEPARTING THE COOP

If you need to permanently close your co-op account, please come to the store during open hours and speak with a staff person. If you have already left town, call the store at 215-729-2121 and ask for staff.

To receive a full refund of your member equity, you must have a credit or zero balance on your account and be up to date on workshift hours. If you depart the coop owing workshift hours, \$20 will be deducted from your equity return for each hour you owe.

If your account remains frozen (due to debt or hours owed) or inactive for an extended period of time, you will receive a 60 day warning notice. If no action is taken in 60 days, your account will be closed.

## WORKSHIFTS

### **Work Requirement & Responsibility**

Every member (who is not exempt) has a workshift every four or six weeks. While working shifts, all members—especially those who work in the store during open hours—are responsible for being the public face of the Co-op. Please be friendly and helpful to members and non-members who come in to shop. Everyone who works during open hours is strongly encouraged to wear a Mariposa apron to help shoppers identify who to ask for help. Additionally, we ask that people working in the store refrain from headphone and cell phone use while working.

Everyone should sign in when arriving for a shift so attendance can be recorded. If you work during open hours, please check in with staff upon arrival and departure. Training will be given on the spot as needed for unfamiliar tasks and first shifts.

It is your responsibility to keep track of when your shifts are scheduled. You can check the workshift calendars on the wall behind the cashier station in the store or log into your MESS account to see your scheduled shifts. All store keeper and cashier shifts that are two hours long happen every four weeks. All cashier shifts that are three hours long occur every six weeks. Remember, **it's not once a month, it's every four (or six) weeks**, so if you worked the first Wednesday of this month, it won't necessarily be the first

Wednesday next month. Write the dates in your calendar.

### Missed Shifts & Make-Ups

If you are unable to work the shift you're scheduled for, you have a few options. First, you should attempt to trade shifts with someone who does the same job on the same day of the week, but on a different week of the rotation. Names and phone numbers of people who work the same shift as you are available on the master schedules in the store or online through MESS. If you make an arrangement to swap, notify a staff person who can make the adjustment on our weekly schedule. If you cannot find anyone to swap with, call the store at 215-729-2121 *at least* 48 hours before your shift and alert staff you will be unable to attend.

**Absences with 48 hours notice (or due to sickness/emergency) will be considered EXCUSED. All others will be considered UNEXCUSED.**

In either case, you will be responsible for making up the hours owed; an unexcused absence will also result in the "freezing" of your account (suspension of shopping privileges) until the hours are made up. (See appendix for Mariposa's workshift policy).

Make-up shifts can be scheduled with any in-store staff person and should be completed before your next regularly-scheduled shift whenever possible. An excused absence from a make-up following an excused absence from a regularly scheduled shift will result in the freezing of your account. An unexcused absence from a make-up following an unexcused absence from a regularly scheduled shift will result in additional hours owed.

### Exemptions

Mariposa does offer (optional) workshift exemptions to members who:

- are pregnant
- are single parents
- have children under the age of 5
- have serious health and/or mobility issues
- are the primary caretaker for someone with a serious illness or disability
- are over the age of 65

If you qualify for an exemption, please speak with a staff member.

### Banking Hours

It is possible to "bank" hours on your account by working ahead or picking up shifts in addition to your required one. Banked hours can be applied to an upcoming shift (excusing you from the shift), providing you give staff at least 48 hours notice. Banked hours *cannot* be counted toward an unexcused absence (shift missed without sufficient notice) or be "cashed in" for store credit.

An account's missed, banked, and attended shifts are recorded in the MESS database and can be reviewed at any time by logging in to your account.

### Working for Store Credit

Members who are up to date on workshift hours are eligible to work for store credit at the rate of \$8/hour. Interested members should ask a staff person to add them to the "Work for Credit" list behind the front desk. Staff may call on credit workers to cover for others' absences or for help in regularly recurring or specialty tasks. Credit workers are employed at the discretion of staff on an as-needed basis; for-credit work is not guaranteed.

### COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF

Please notify staff if:

- Your contact information changes (or update it online through MESS)
- You wish to change your job or shift rotation
- You decide to leave the Co-op
- You need to take (or lengthen) a leave of absence
- You need to discuss a workshift exemption

For questions regarding shift options, your attendance record, special circumstances (exemptions, leave of absence, etc.) or your membership, call the coop office at 215-729-0303.

For all other inquiries, call the store at 215-729-2121.

# Shopping

## PRODUCTS & PRICING

Many of us think about the hidden costs of food, such as the costs to the environment and the health of farm workers, as well as our own health. For this reason, Mariposa stocks a wide range of organic and locally-grown/produced foods, as well as an increasing number of Fair Trade products. Organic produce and bulk foods at the co-op are identified with bright orange labels to help shoppers recognize them at a glance. White stickers on these items indicate that they have been grown conventionally or without organic certification. Some of our locally-grown produce bears the additional descriptor of “Chem-Free” (meaning grown without any chemical pesticides or fertilizers, but not certified organic—signified by a green label on produce bins) or Low-Spray/IPM (indicating products grown using minimal pesticides or Integrated Pest Management).

### **Produce**

Produce prices are updated daily according to our wholesale costs. The produce price list is available at the cashiers desk and by the fruit and vegetable displays. Most of our produce is delivered on Tuesdays and Fridays. We also receive additional small deliveries from local farms throughout the week, depending on the season. We strive to get as much produce locally as possible. Several of the farmers we buy from are not certified organic (often due to the costs involved), but follow organic growing methods. These items are labeled as “Chemical-Free Local.”

### **Locally-Produced Goods**

Currently, our array of local products includes: produce, fresh herbs, milk, eggs, cheese, butter, yogurt, ice cream, tofu, seitan, bread, flour, baked goods, granola, hummus, sandwiches, apple cider, sauerkraut, kimchee, hot sauce, pickles, salsa, jams, honey, maple syrup, and more.

(See appendix for a store map and full list of our suppliers).

### **Mark-ups**

Our product mark-ups are structured, not to make a profit, but to cover our overhead expenses, such as office supplies, utilities, and staff payroll. Mari-

posa’s mark-ups vary depending on the category of product. Milk carries the lowest mark-up to make our prices competitive to those of standard grocery stores, who often sell milk at a loss. In general, perishable items like produce and bread carry a lower mark-up, and non-perishable items higher. Also, we sometimes add a slightly higher mark-up to goods that we receive on sale from our suppliers. Standard mark-ups are as follows:

**20%:** milk, bulk orders, water filters

**35%:** cheese, yogurt, eggs, tofu, vegan “meats”, hummus, fresh bread, sandwiches, etc.

**40%:** produce, dry goods (packaged & bulk), bulk cheeses, ice cream, frozen foods, baked goods, pet food, cleaning products

**50%:** vitamins and supplements, personal care products, spices

**Taxable items** also include sales tax in the sticker price (to simplify cashiering)—please keep this in mind when comparing prices!

## OVERSTOCK AREAS

Overstock of refrigerated food is kept in the walk-in refrigerator, just outside the back door. If you are shopping during open hours, you can ask the storekeeper to check the walk-in for anything that is out of stock in the refrigerators in the store or on the produce shelves. Refrigerated bulk items, such as tofu and pickles, can also be found in the walk-in.

Non-perishable overstock is stored in the basement. If a product you want seems to be out of stock on the store shelves, you can ask a storekeeper to check the basement.

Fresh bread that is not sold promptly is moved to the chest freezer in the basement, and may be bought at cost (found by dividing the sticker price by 1.35). **This applies only to previously-fresh bakery breads, and not to commercially-packaged breads and other products that are bought and sold frozen.**

## BULK ORDERING

If there are products you use a lot of, would like to save money on, or that

Mariposa doesn't normally stock, consider bulk ordering. If our distributors carry it, we can get it for you—just fill out a bulk order slip, located in a small box on the shelves in the front window. One of the big advantages of bulk ordering is that you pay less—the mark-up on bulk orders is only 20% over wholesale. And, although a case is the minimum quantity for many items, some products (such as supplements and personal care) are sold individually and can be bulk ordered one at a time. Please note that **bulk orders will only be placed if you have enough credit on your account to cover the cost of the order** (unless you are paying with food stamps/EBT). For information or guidance about bulk ordering, speak to a staff member.

## PAYMENT OPTIONS

To ensure the safety of our members and staff, reduce the risk of theft, and minimize loss due to cashier error, **Mariposa does not accept cash**. All purchases must be paid for by personal check, money order, EBT (food stamps or cash benefits), travelers checks, or credit/debit card. Checks should be made payable to “Mariposa, Inc” and you should include your account name in the memo field of the check. You can pay any time the co-op is open, or by leaving a check or money order in the drop-box (attached to the basement staircase) if you have after-hours access. **Paying ahead, paying in larger amounts, and paying by check, money order, or EBT, when possible, saves the co-op money and improves our cash flow.**

### **Credit/Debit Fees**

If you wish to use a debit or credit card, keep in mind that credit card companies charge fees for each transaction. For purchases less than \$18, it is cheaper for the Co-op to process a credit transaction; for purchases over \$18, debit is cheaper. For purchases under \$5, Mariposa prefers that you pay ahead (if possible) or leave the balance on your account and pay with your next purchase.

### **EBT/SNAP/Food Stamps**

Mariposa accepts EBT cards. Because EBT transactions are recorded differently than other sales, please tell the cashier you will be paying with EBT at the beginning of your transaction.

There are strict state laws regarding the use of EBT that the cashier must follow. **According to law, food stamps cannot be used to pay for non-food**

**items, carbonated beverages, anything consumed in the store, or for credit or debt.** This means that you can only use food stamps to pay for what you are buying at the time of payment—you cannot use it to pay ahead, or to pay off a previously accumulated balance. **If you want to use EBT food stamps to pay for a bulk order, you must note it on the order form;** otherwise it will be billed directly to your account upon arrival and become part of your pre-existing balance.

We regret that some aspects of the way Mariposa operates, combined with government regulations, may make some types of shopping difficult for members who use EBT; however, Mariposa must follow the laws regarding EBT use or risk losing our ability to accept it.

## EXTENDED CREDIT PRIVILEGES

After six months of membership in good standing, you may apply for extended credit privileges. Mariposa extends \$25 in credit (meaning you may temporarily owe \$25 on your account) to members in need. **Using credit privileges for convenience is strongly discouraged.** If you need a temporary credit extension of more than \$25, speak to a staff member.

(See appendix for Mariposa's balance policy).

## KEY ACCESS & AFTER-HOURS SHOPPING

After six months of membership in good standing, you may apply for a key card for after-hours shopping. When the store is closed, there are no cashiers, so shopping is recorded item by item in an after-hours shopping binder. The binders have a page for each key-holding account. **No one is permitted to shop after hours except those who have attended a key/after hours shopping training.** All after-hours shoppers should keep a credit on their account to cover the cost of after-hours purchases. After-hours shopping is billed once a week. Unfortunately, **due to state regulations, there is no way to pay for after-hours purchases with food stamps.**

The store is closed to all shopping between midnight and 6 a.m.

## WHILE YOU'RE AT MARIPOSA

### Front Door Safety

The front door is kept locked when the store is not open. If you are in the store before opening or after close, do not let anyone in. Likewise, if you find yourself locked out, do not ask other members to let you in. Please think of the Co-op as a place to keep secure much as you would your own home.

### The Phone

It is fine to use the store phone for co-op business, such as calling other members to arrange a shift switch or calling home to check in about a needed ingredient. Please ask a staff person before using the phone, when possible, and please do not use the co-op phone for personal calls.

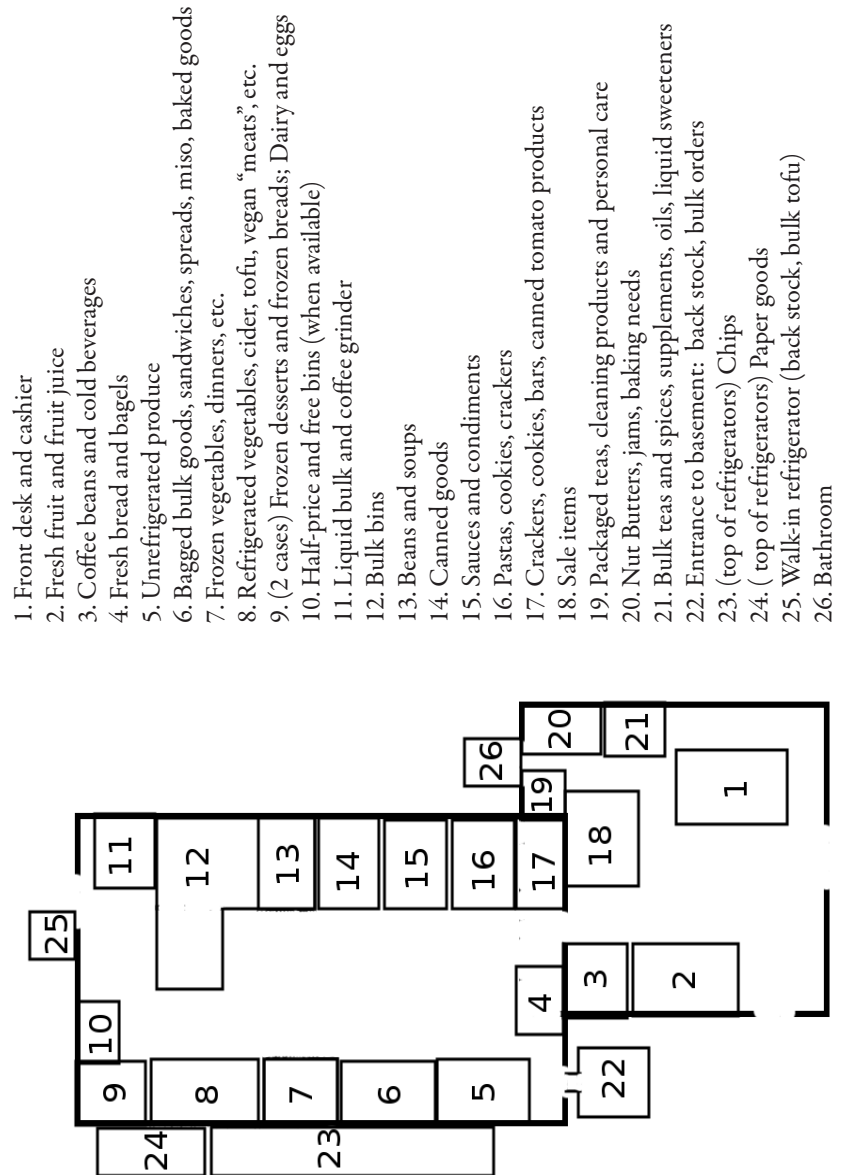
### Pets in the Store

Please leave your pets at home or outside. In compliance with health code standards, pets (with the exception of guide animals) are not allowed inside the store.

### Questions?

During open hours, staff and/or a storekeeper are available to help you. Ask them if you need help locating a product, notice something in need of attention/restocking, or have other inquiries about the store or your account. You may also leave a note in a relevant staff member's mailbox or a message on the store voicemail after hours.

## STORE MAP



# Structure & Governance

Mariposa Food Co-op is an unusual business—the people who shop here, our members, also dictate how the Co-op runs. Our structures are created (and modified) by members, and are designed to emphasize participation, community, and democratic control. We intentionally govern ourselves very differently from the way competitive, for-profit businesses (and many traditional nonprofit organizations) do. Rather than taking direction from an individual “on top” or investors/funders outside of the organization, we practice a collective, consensus-seeking process of decision-making in which all members are encouraged to participate.

## DECISION-MAKING

How are decisions made? Currently, at Mariposa, there are three different decision-making bodies:

### **The Staff Collective**

Responsible for day-to-day operations of the store, the Staff makes decisions like how many carrots to order, how to best train members doing shifts, and how to implement policies (such as the Workshift Policy) passed by the Board. The Staff meets weekly and makes decisions by an informal consensus process.

### **The Board of Delegates**

Elected by the General Membership, and featuring a representative of each of Mariposa’s standing committees, the Board meets monthly to craft policies (such as the Balance Policy) and make policy-level decisions that are beyond the Staff’s authority. The Board also oversees hiring and makes decisions by consensus.

### **The General Membership**

“Big picture” decisions, such as those that would dramatically change the character of the Co-op or cause us to amend our bylaws, are made at quarterly General Membership Meetings. All members are encouraged to attend GMMs and, providing quorum is reached, the members present constitute the decision-making body. (See Mariposa’s bylaws, available at [www.mariposa.coop](http://www.mariposa.coop) for more info).

## COMMITTEES

In addition to the three decision-making bodies, there are a number of committees within Mariposa that meet regularly to work on specific issues, such as member accountability or training. Often these committees assist in the creation of documents, programs, and policy proposals for the Board.

### **Standing Committees**

Mariposa has eight standing committees, comprised of a combination of members and staff, that are written into the bylaws and entitled to representation on the Board of Delegates. They are:

- Facilities
- Food Justice and Anti-Racism
- Member Accountability
- Education, Training, and Orientation
- Personnel
- Operations
- Staff Collective
- Finance (whose representative is always the Treasurer)

(See appendix for full committee descriptions).

### **Ad hoc Committees**

In addition to the standing committees, the Board or General Membership Meeting may call for the creation of an ad hoc committee to focus on a specific project or issue in need of attention. Often, ad hoc committees exist short-term, disbanding once their goal has been achieved, but their work may also be ongoing in nature. Any member can propose the creation of an ad hoc committee, and the General Membership may invite an ad hoc committee to send a delegate to the Board.

### **Committee Participation**

Members may receive workshift credit for regular participation in committee work. Some committees are open to all interested members, while others function better with a small, consistent group. If you think you may be interested in joining a committee, please contact the committee leader (information available on the Member Info board in the co-op) before attending a meeting.

## **THE BOARD OF DELEGATES**

In February 2009, the General Membership Meeting passed new bylaws that called for the creation of a Board of Delegates. The Board (elected annually by the General Membership Meeting for staggered 1 and 2-year terms) consists of the following:

- three officers (secretary, treasurer, and convener)
- four to seven representatives from the standing committees
- a number of at-large delegates (from the coop membership) equal to the number of committee delegates

The Board of Delegates holds both regular (monthly) and special meetings and posts the times, locations, and agendas of those meetings in the Co-op and on the Mariposa website. Members are welcome to attend Board meetings (unless the Board is in executive session), but non-board members can not participate in decision-making.

## **GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

All members are encouraged to attend General Membership Meetings (GMMs). General Membership Meetings are held quarterly, with the Annual General Membership Meeting taking place during the month of March and other meetings occurring at approximately three-month intervals throughout the year. GMMs are always advertised in the store and via the Mariposa email list. A quorum of members (40 members or 5% of the Co-op's total members—whichever is less) is necessary to pass any decision. Participation in making decisions must be in person, unless specifically authorized in the Bylaws. Each member has equal rights in decision-making; proxy shoppers may participate in discussions, but not decisions.

Every GMM has a designated facilitator and a note taker. Generally, meetings begin with introductions, a review of the consensus process, approval of minutes from the last meeting, and a review of the current meeting's agenda. Decisions at GMMs are made by consensus. The goal of consensus-building, unlike majority voting, is to hear all sides of an issue and make space for dissent. Also, unlike majority vote models, consensus makes space for folks to agree to something for the group even if they would not agree to it solely for themselves. This is the biggest difference between consensus and majority voting—in consensus, it is important to ask not only what is good for

oneself, but also what is good for the whole. (See appendix for more information about the consensus process).

Minutes from every General Membership Meeting are posted in the store and on the website, and sent out via the Mariposa email list. As a member, it is your responsibility to participate in decision-making when possible and to stay informed about decisions made in meetings you are unable to attend. The Co-op works best when members contribute and stay up to date on changes.

# Appendix

## HISTORY OF CO-OPS

In Rochdale, England, 1844, the Industrial Revolution was in full sway, leaving poverty and degradation in its wake. Wages were low, prices high, and the Chartist movement, one of history's great democratic uprisings, was being brutally suppressed. Faced with dismal prospects for social change through political organizing and worse prospects for political change through armed uprising, the weavers of Rochdale turned to a different kind revolutionary tactic: they rented a small warehouse on Toad Lane, bought 28 pounds of butter, 56 pounds of sugar, six hundredweight of flour, a sack of oatmeal, and some candles (because the gas company refused to provide service to such a subversive enterprise) and opened a food co-op. Less than a hundred years later, nearly a third of the population in the UK belonged to consumer co-ops supplying groceries, banking and insurance services, lending libraries, night classes, and even funeral parlors. Organizing experience gained in co-ops played a significant part in the development of trade unions and of the Labor Party, in women's suffrage, and in helping to achieve many of the Chartists' original goals while providing millions of people with inexpensive and high-quality goods and services.

Why is Rochdale still so important? It wasn't the first modern co-op, and it certainly wasn't the first example of the universal human activity of voluntary cooperation. It wasn't even the first co-op in England.

That Rochdale coop was the first to base its structure on a set of clearly defined and reproducible principles that could be generalized to cover not only the needs of any food co-op but, with modifications, any cooperative organization at all. These principles have continued to evolve, and they have directly or indirectly inspired most of the formally organized co-ops in the world today.

Cooperative-like organizations in Philadelphia date back to the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries, and include everything from a short lived workers' co-op started by striking shoemakers to still-thriving insurance companies and libraries founded by Ben Franklin. Philadelphia's first 'movement' co-op was a grocery store started in the 1850s and based closely on the Rochdale model. (This may have been the first American coop, although another

in Boston was likely a few months older). Though this organization existed for less than a decade, new food co-ops formed by members of our communities have existed continuously in the city ever since.

In Philadelphia and across the US, consumer co-ops have seen waves of growth. In Philadelphia, many coops were started in immigrant communities, some by socialists and anarchists, around the turn of the 20th century. The 1920s and the Great Depression brought the single greatest cooperative boom as other economic systems struggled. The Swarthmore Co-op, the oldest Philadelphia-area consumer co-op dates to this period. Probably the first coop in West Philadelphia, the United Consumer Cooperative at 46th and Woodland, was established by members of the Young Negroes Cooperative League (a national organization). The current food co-ops in the Philadelphia area, including Mariposa, Weavers Way in Mt Airy (named in honor of the Rochdale mill workers) and the Selene Co-op in Media originated in the political and social movements of the 1960s and 70s and continue to attract many members interested in progressive causes.

Some food co-ops have chosen to remain buying clubs rather than becoming retail storefronts. Mariposa looks to support such ventures in any capacity. Philadelphia is well supplied with credit unions (some genuinely controlled by members, others little more than banks with nominal, uncontested elections), a number of (mostly small) worker co-ops, and some cooperative housing, much of it in West Philly. The Energy Cooperative of Pennsylvania was founded in 1979 by Weavers Way, and now serves over 6500 members throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania. (Much of the rural US gained access to electric power through co-ops, most of them organized as part of the New Deal in the late 1930s.) Organizations that share much of the philosophy of the cooperative movement without being formally organized as co-ops include exceptionally vigorous community garden and community supported agriculture movements.

Mariposa sells some items produced by worker co-ops such as Once Again nut butters and producer co-ops like Lancaster Farm Fresh Cooperative and Organic Valley dairy products. Some agricultural co-ops in the US maintain ties with the rest of the co-op movement, but California growers' co-ops have followed a business model removed from the ideals of the Rochdale principles, as has Ocean Spray, a co-operative organized by cranberry growers in 1930.

The bulk herbs and spices Mariposa sells come from Frontier, a wholesale co-op whose members are the retail stores who buy from it. There are wholesale

co-ops in other industries besides natural foods. TrueValue is a national cooperative distributor owned by local hardware stores. Philadelphia Reserve Supply Company is a regional distributor of building materials whose members are retail supply yards.

Until 2003, Mariposa was a member of regional wholesaler Northeast Cooperatives. Northeast was one of several regional co-op distributors, owned by natural foods groceries, not all of them co-ops - along with co-op storefronts like Mariposa's size and larger, and buying clubs, Northeast's members included small commercial groceries and large chains like Whole Foods. But in 2003, Northeast members faced bankruptcy, and were forced to sell out to their largest corporate competitor, United Natural Foods. Many other regional co-op distributors have met the same fate over the past twenty years - in 1982 there were 28 around the country, now a handful remain.

What happened? Several things. Many retail co-ops that had opened in the 1960s & 70s closed as members aged and natural foods became widely available. Some of the smaller co-op distributors merged into larger territories. This and the increasing shift to paid staff and management in the retail co-ops meant less member involvement in the wholesale co-ops, and as they too shifted decision-making to elected boards, many gradually moved toward a standard corporate business model. Northeast tried to compete with United in the corporate game of coast-to-coast expansion, but in the end United won. Mariposa, like many other former members of Northeast, now has to buy from United, which offers a narrower range of products at higher prices, requires larger case lot purchases, and offers none of the co-operative training and support that Northeast provided for its members.

## **THE COOPERATIVE PRINCIPALS**

### **1. Open, Voluntary Membership**

Co-operatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

### **2. Democratic Control**

Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the member-

ship. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

### **3. Member Economic Participation**

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

### **4. Autonomy and Independence**

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

### **5. Education**

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

### **6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives**

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.

### **7. Concern for Community**

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

## THE WORKSHIFT POLICY

One missed shift with less than 48 hours notice (unless it is an emergency) or 2 consecutive missed shifts *with* notice will result in suspension of all shopping privileges for the account until all owed hours are made up.

A missed shift is a shift that was scheduled and was not covered by anyone. If a member arranges to switch shifts with another member, the originally-scheduled person must notify staff.

## OUR SUPPLIERS

**The Common Market** (Local, Philadelphia-based distributor)

Local produce, honey, and canned tomatoes

Delivery: Wednesdays

**Frankferd Farms** (Local, PA-based, family-run distributor)

Bulk dry goods (grains, nuts, seeds, locally-milled flours), cheese, tempeh, assorted packaged dry goods (available by the piece, as well as by the case)

Delivery: every other Thursday

**Frontier Natural Products** (Indiana-based wholesale co-op)

Bulk spices and teas, spice jars, tea accessories

Delivery: as needed

**Green Meadow Farm** (Local, PA-based farm and distributor)

Local produce, dairy, eggs, meat, flour and grain

Delivery: Thursdays

**Lancaster Farm Fresh Co-op** (Farmer's cooperative from Lancaster County)

Local produce (mostly organic, some chem-free and low-spray), hormone-free milk, yogurt, cheese, eggs, honey, and apple cider

Delivery: Tuesdays & Fridays

**Lancaster Foods** (Maryland-based distributor)

Organic and conventional produce

Delivery: as needed

**Mill Creek Farm** (Local, West Philly farm)

Seasonal chem-free produce from down the street!

Delivery: Mondays

**Paradise Organics** (Local, PA-based, farmer who also distributes produce from other farms)

Organic produce, organic milk and cheese

Deliveries: Tuesdays & Fridays

**United Natural Foods Inc.** (Our largest supplier; big, national distributor)

Packaged and bulk dry goods, organic dairy products (and vegan alternatives), "fake meats", ice cream, frozen foods, and personal care items

Delivery: Tuesdays & Fridays

## DESCRIPTIONS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

### **Facilities**

Oversees the management/maintenance of our current building and plans for our expansion into a larger space.

### **Food Justice & Anti-Racism Working Group (FJAR)**

FJAR understands racism to be a form of oppression that is linked to and reinforces all other oppressions. Therefore, we work to identify and dismantle institutionalized racism, classism, patriarchy, ableism, homophobia and transphobia within Mariposa, and to align our co-op with social change related to fair labor practices, food access, environmental justice and anti-gentrification. Our work will consist of organizing anti-oppression trainings for staff/members, offering solidarity and support to relevant local organizations, strategic organizational development, outreach and more. Our aim is to create positive social change at Mariposa which will serve as a catalyst in dismantling broader institutionalized oppressions in our communities.

### **Member Accountability**

Works in support of the Membership Coordinator to streamline our workshift and account systems, improve member accountability, and ensure members are informed regarding their responsibilities.

### **Education, Training, and Orientation**

Develops workshift trainings and training materials; oversees new member orientations.

## Personnel

Drafts personnel policies; assists with hiring and staff evaluations.

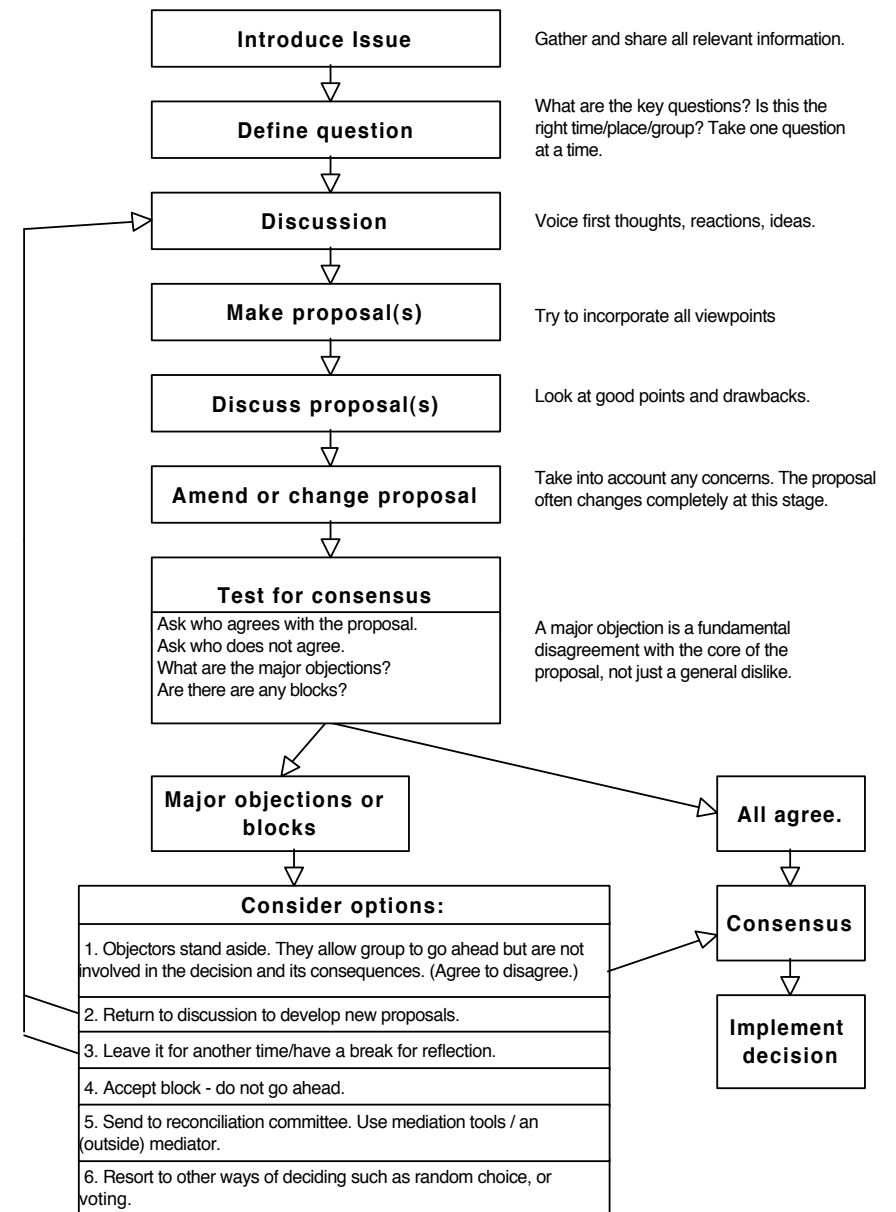
## Operations & Staff Collective (currently meeting as one body)

Comprised of the paid staff; oversee daily store operations (buying, mark-ups, managing, receiving deliveries); develop systems, procedures, and policy recommendations to improve store functioning; self-management of the staff collective (including participating in hiring, peer evaluations, role/task delegation, etc.)

## Finance

Reviews our fiscal situation and creates proposals/procedures to enhance the management of our finances for the future.

## Consensus Decision-Making Flowchart



### Seeds for Change

www.seedsforchange.org.uk hello@seedsforchange.org.uk  
 0845 330 7583 @nti-copywrite - copy + distribute

## CONSENSUS

The flow chart on the previous page is useful for understanding how consensus works as a decision-making process. First, a proposal is made. The group first raises any questions needed to clarify the proposal, then discusses how well they think the proposal addresses the issues. Minor objections may be addressed by modifying the proposal; major objections may require the group to set aside the existing proposal and bring forward an alternate proposal to consider.

Going through this flow chart, you can see that the goal of consensus-building, unlike majority voting, is to hear all sides of an issue and make space for dissent. Ideally, a well-run consensus process allows members to raise objections and encourages the group to address those objections by modifying the original proposal, or turning to an alternate proposal. If for some reason this does not happen, the process also empowers any member to block consensus. To do so means not just that one does not like the proposal, but that one firmly believes that it would not be good for the co-op as a whole.

### **Tips for Being Part of a Consensus-Building Group**

(from <http://www.markshep.com/nonviolence/Consensus.html>)

Consensus does not require that everyone be in complete agreement, but only that all be willing to accept—consent to—a decision. If the group fails to accommodate your viewpoint after fair effort, ask yourself if you feel strongly enough to uphold your position. If not, it may be best to “stand aside.” Refusing to do so might paralyze the group.

Also, consensus does not give everyone an equal voice. Some people know more and care more about an issue. Naturally, their views should carry greater weight.

Better decisions often take longer—in the short run. Try not to make it worse. Before you speak, ask yourself whether your statement is worth the group’s time. (To get an idea of this, you could multiply your speaking time by the number of listeners.) If someone else has said it, you may not need to. When you speak, be brief and to the point—and say it only once.

If time is short and the group is large, a matter may need to be turned over to a smaller group. Try to cultivate the mutual trust that allows this.

Be aware of how often you speak. Of course, some people will at times have more to offer. Still, you may have to stop yourself from speaking too often, to avoid dominating. Or if you’re shy, you may need to push yourself to speak. Consensus can fail if some group members dominate others.

A moment of silence can work wonders in easing tensions.

A chosen facilitator can help consensus by keeping the discussion on track, encouraging good process, and posing alternatives that may resolve differences. But a facilitator is a servant, not a director, and assumes a neutral role. If a facilitator wishes to take a stand on an issue, facilitation is handed to someone else.

Consensus makes special demands on all. You must respect and consider each other. You must have a sense of common searching, instead of wanting to win. You must be sensitive and open to each others’ ideas and feelings, and honestly try to accommodate them. Finally, you must be dedicated to uncovering and pursuing truth—even if it leads where you never expected.