

BC Co-operative
Association

2019/2020 Highlights





Karen
McDonald

Zoë
Creighton



Elizabeth
Lougheed
Green



Board of Directors:

Ben Hyman, Chair; John Kay, Vice Chair; Karen McDonald, Zoë Creighton, Mary Childs, Michelle Iverson, Elizabeth Lougheed Green, Christian Brandt, Phil Baudin, Patrick Nangle



Message from the Board Chair Ben Hyman

We acknowledge that for many of our members, and for all of us personally, our fiscal year ended with extraordinary disruption and upheaval. We are acutely aware that while some of our members have been able to pivot their operations in innovative ways, others have faced hardship.

As your association, we stand with all of you as we navigate through a forever-changed landscape. We stand strong in our belief that now - perhaps more than ever - the world needs co-operatives and credit unions to shine the light on how we can shift to a stronger, more resilient economy in BC.

Co-ops are at the forefront of the challenges we face locally, provincially, and globally. BCCA members provide health and social services, support community development, and are leading

the way with innovations to keep our communities safe and creating clean energy technology that can propel us towards a greener future. The resiliency of our sector is second to none and provides a model for economic development and job creation.

Despite the tremendous upheavals that have marked 2020 so far, we are looking forward to an equally rewarding year ahead with a workplan focused on expanding our government relations efforts to advocate for co-operatives as a proven model for addressing some of the painful issues further brought to light as a result of the pandemic.

This includes ensuring co-operatives and credit unions are recognized for their many community contributions and have

access to the resources they need to weather the pandemic and to thrive going forward.

It takes a team to move our vision forward, and I am thankful to all past and present members of the BCCA Board of Directors, and Andrea Harris and her team of resourceful and skilled professionals. And most of all, I thank all of you, our members, sustaining members, and funders, for your continued support of your BC Co-operative Association.



BCCA Administrative Team:

Andrea Harris, Executive Director; Brad Boyce, Finance Manager; Samantha Lee, Communications; Maggie Miland, Community Administrator; Lisa Furfaro, Co-op Education Manager, Iva Jankovic, Co-operative Education Coordinator; Jackie Sargent, Communications; Marla Gagnier, Administration and Member Services Coordinator; Madelyn Reid, Volunteer



Message from the Executive Director Andrea Harris

2019-2020 was a big year for your co-operative association. We kicked it off at our June AGM, where we engaged our members to help us reframe our strategic plan into four key areas of focus: promoting the co-op model, strengthening existing co-ops, growing more co-op businesses, and connecting the system.

Our administrative team is key to bringing our strategic plan to life, and we saw many changes over the past year. Brad Boyce, our long time Finance Manager, has taken on a new role with our friend and member, Realize Strategies Co-operative. We also said grateful goodbyes to Samantha Lee, our part-time Communications Coordinator, Maggie Miland, Community Administrator, and to Lisa Furfaro, BCCA's enthusiastic Co-operative Education Manager. Thanks to Brad, Maggie, Lisa and Sam for their commitment, infectious enthusiasm, and

their many valuable contributions to BCCA and the co-op sector.

In December, Iva Jancovic joined us as Co-op Education Coordinator, to deliver the Co-ops in Schools program and broaden BCCA's reach in post-secondary institutions. As part of our deepening partnership with the Alberta Community and Co-operative Association (ACCA), we welcomed Jackie Sargent as Manager, Communications, who splits her time and talents between ACCA and BCCA. Rounding out the new team is Marla Gagnier, who joined us in June as our Membership and Administration Coordinator – welcome Marla! A big thank you as well to our wonderful volunteers with a special shout out to Madelyn Reid, who helped us with our member stories and co-op cafes.

In this report, you'll read about some BCCA's accomplishments over our 2019/2020 fiscal year, including an active

government relations agenda, new strategic partnerships, how we continue to inspire new cohorts of co-operators, our Co-op Week Innovation Forum and the newly revamped Co-ops In Schools program.

We know that 2020 has been a challenge for our members, personally and professionally. While the pandemic has caused a shift in our lives and our organizations, it has reinforced the importance of the co-operative principles, and that by working and supporting each other, we achieve more and can build stronger communities.

Strategic Overview

There are 260+ housing co-operatives providing affordable housing in B.C.

Childcare co-ops were found to reduce costs by up to 50%

Co-ops represent 0.7% of B.C. employment

There are more than 700 active co-ops in B.C.

Strategic Priorities

The BC Co-operative Association represents the collective interests of co-operatives and credit unions across the province.

As your association, we work to:

- **Promote** and enhance awareness of the co-operative model amongst elected officials, government staff, entrepreneurs, youth, academics, and the general public.
- **Strengthen** co-operatives through the sharing of best practices and development of programs and resources.
- **Connect** the system, by bringing co-ops together to create strong partnerships and collaboration to amplify our shared values, market visibility, and sector strength.
- **Grow** more co-operative businesses, by supporting the innovation of new models and providing tools and referral services for co-op start-ups.

Government Relations

In 2019 we continued to push forward an active government relations agenda, which included advocating to improve access to investment capital for co-operatives, ensuring co-operatives and credit unions have equal access to government funded programs and services, and to simplify and modernize the Co-operative Association Act.

On behalf of our members, the BCCA:

- Collaborated with the BC Community Investment Coalition to propose amendments to the Securities commission regarding BCI45-530 to enable greater investment in co-operatives. We are happy to announce that the Securities Commission did adopt some of the proposed changes and has increased the \$5000 cap to \$10000.
- Provided the Ministry of Finance with input into the review of the societies Act and how it aligns to the Co-operative Associations Act.
- Polled co-op developers across the province and our newsletter readers to understand the issues with the Co-operative Association Act. This work culminated in a letter to the Ministry of Finance recommending a review of the Act (last reviewed in

1998) and outlining a comprehensive list of opportunities to simplify and modernize the Act, to enable greater opportunities for the capitalization of co-ops, and to remove investment barriers.

- Successfully advocated for on-line AGMs and an extension on holding AGMs in light of COVID-19 pandemic.

Co-operative Education

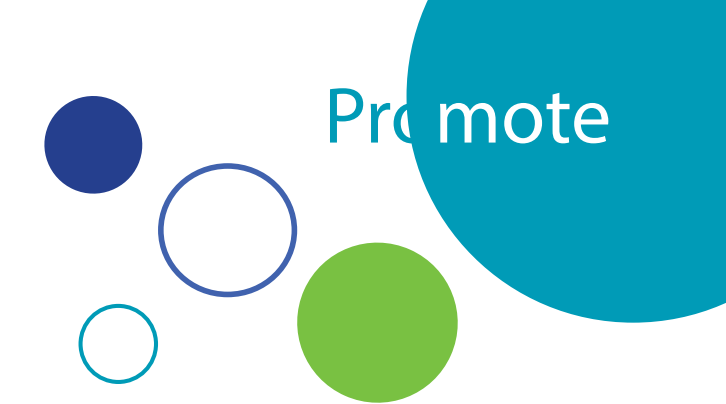
We saw many achievements in our Co-operative Education program in 2019-2020 including significant innovations in program content and delivery to engage new audiences and broadening our reach.

We revamped the Co-ops in Schools Program to focus more specifically on engaging youth aged 19-29, raising awareness of the co-op model amongst

post-secondary students through Co-ops 101 workshops in classrooms and other curriculum supplements.

Research conducted in early January pointed to the lack of co-op education opportunities in the province. In response, the Board formed an Ad Hoc Committee on Co-op Education to further amplify our co-op education efforts and to strategize how to embed the co-op and credit union model into post-secondary curriculum. We also expanded our Co-ops 101 workshop program to other groups of emerging entrepreneurs and our own members. In total, we held 17 workshops and engaged over 320 participants.

In response to the challenges brought on by COVID-19, the latter part of the year was focused on digitizing our Co-operative Education program through the creation of an Open Educational Resource



toolkit for learners and educators - including a slide deck, assignment/discussion package, and interactive activities created in partnership with the Youth Excellence Society - all published under a Creative Commons license.

These resources have been published on BCCA's website with the aim of making them accessible to a wider audience and opening doors to building new relationships with diverse groups of stakeholders.

We had the opportunity to pilot our Open Educational Resources toolkit with an SFU Environmental Resource Management Class, with positive feedback.

"I was very pleased to collaborate with BCCo-op in the creation of one assignment for the course I lead at SFU. The topic is relevant for a world where cooperatives have been playing a key role towards achieving sustainable communities. I felt my students were happy to engage in work that involved a real-world application of the concepts seen in the classroom, and they also had the opportunity to professionally network with the people at BC Coop!"

Jesus Pulido Castanon, Professor at SFU School of Resource and Environmental Management, and tester of BCCA's OER Co-operative Learning Assignment

Strengthen

Board and Employee Workshops

We support our members in accessing the information and resources they need to grow and strengthen their co-op.

This year, in response to member demand, we piloted webinars to support co-ops in building strong boards and governance practices as well as Co-ops 101 to orient employees to the benefits and unique elements of the co-op model.

In 2020, we will be launching these workshops on a fee-for-service basis, allowing us to diversify our revenue sources while also meeting the needs of co-ops and credit unions.

COVID Response

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic had just begun to emerge at the end of our fiscal year in March. In response, the BCCA mobilized quickly to support our members in accessing information needed to navigate the crisis.

We hosted several on-line meet ups to share information, starting with how to hold meetings, including AGMs, on-line, understanding force majeure, and the various federal and provincial government supports available to co-operatives.

We connected with many of our members during this time to better understand their needs and we were able to share their stories of determination and innovation through our "We are Co-ops" series.

Our outreach also led us to offering facilitated Zoom meetings to support our credit union and co-op members who hadn't yet had the experience of on-line meetings.

"The Zoom account offered tremendous efficiencies. [BCCA] offered assistance right through ... This is a wonderful offering for small co-ops like ours."

Debby Zeeban, Board President,
Community First Health Co-op





Co-op Cafes, Tours and Newsletter

Through a network of dedicated volunteers, we expanded our Co-op Cafes to other regions of BC, including Kamloops, Nelson and Comox. Over 130 people attended co-op cafes across the province to connect with other co-operators and discuss current issues and opportunities.

In May, BCCA hosted a tour of co-ops in the Comox Valley featuring visits to the Toolshed and Merville Organics.

Tour participants ended the day being hosted by Creekside Commons housing community for tea and discussion.

In the fall, we collaborated with Vancity and One Big Table to host Jon Steinman on two stops of his Grocery Story book tour in

Vancouver and Kelowna.

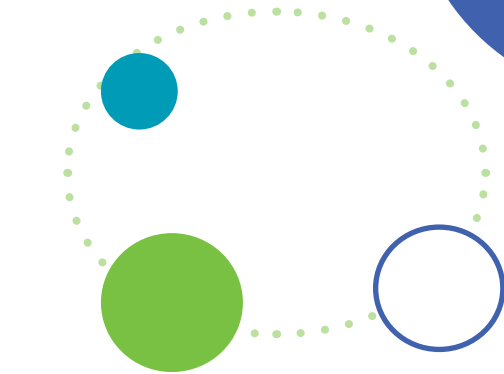
The BCCA e-newsletter, which is sent out every two weeks, continues to be a popular source of information. In the past year, we have gained over 100 new subscribers, with nearly 1550 subscribers as of June 2020.

Co-op Week Innovation

"Hungry for change? Put the power of food co-ops on your plate and grow your local food economy."

- Jon Steinman

Connect



Forum

Co-op Week 2019 marked BCCA's first Innovation Forum, featuring two panels of co-operators and some great discussions.

Co-op leaders from across the Pacific Northwest shared their stories of co-op success and insights on how to grow the co-op movement.

While the event offered seasoned co-operators the opportunity to celebrate and reconnect, we were also happy to see that many of the 100+ attendees were new to co-ops and credit unions so the event offered a good introduction to the diversity and creativity of the sector.

Grow

Co-op Development Referrals and Supports

As part of our strategic review in the fall of 2019, the BCCA reduced its role in providing hands-on co-op development consulting, focusing instead on referring future co-ops to the spectrum of supports available, including a robust network of co-operative development consultants across the province and the Co-operate Now program.

The BCCA also forged new strategic partnerships with Co-operatives First, Futurpreneur, and the Women's Economic Council's new immigrant entrepreneurship program.

Through our long-term alliance with Vancity, we continued to inspire new cohorts of co-operators through our sold-out Co-operate Now business bootcamps. April and November cohorts saw 34 participants work on business plans for 17 new co-operatives.

Early in 2020, we paused the program to conduct a review to better understand its

impact and to gather some insights on how we might improve it.

We learned the program has resulted in at least 41 new co-operatives incorporated since the program started in 2015 with over 250 co-operators participating. Eighty-six per cent of the 36 participants who took the program and responded to the survey indicated they were extremely satisfied with it.

One of the most popular ideas for improving the program included incorporating follow-up coaching support. Other ideas brought forward included tweaking the delivery format to include online elements. We will be incorporating these suggestions into our 2020 online program slated for the fall.

To prove the continued relevance of the co-op model, BCCA staff and directors participated in two innovation projects, one looking at ride-hailing (abbydrives.com - women driving women) and another exploring conversions of existing businesses into co-ops as a tool for succession (coopconvert.ca).

Had many requests for our Co-op development guide and referred 70+ groups to development resources such as Co-operatives First, Futurpreneur, and a network of co-op developers across the province

New Members

This past year, we were pleased to welcome new members to the BCCA family:

Partners in Care Alliance (PICA) providing education and advocacy on end-of-life care.

www.partnersincarealliance.org.

Shift Collaborative offers strategy, coaching, training, and tools to support innovation for a more resilient world.

www.shiftcollaborative.ca

BC Craft Farmers Co-op is accelerating market access in the cannabis industry.

www.bccraftfarmerscoop.com

The YES provides training to BC youth through the co-op and credit union movement. www.theyes.ca

Financial Overview

BCCA's fiscal year, ending March 31, 2020, was favourable financially. We ended the year with a strong balance sheet, and a surplus of revenue over expenditures of \$31,833.

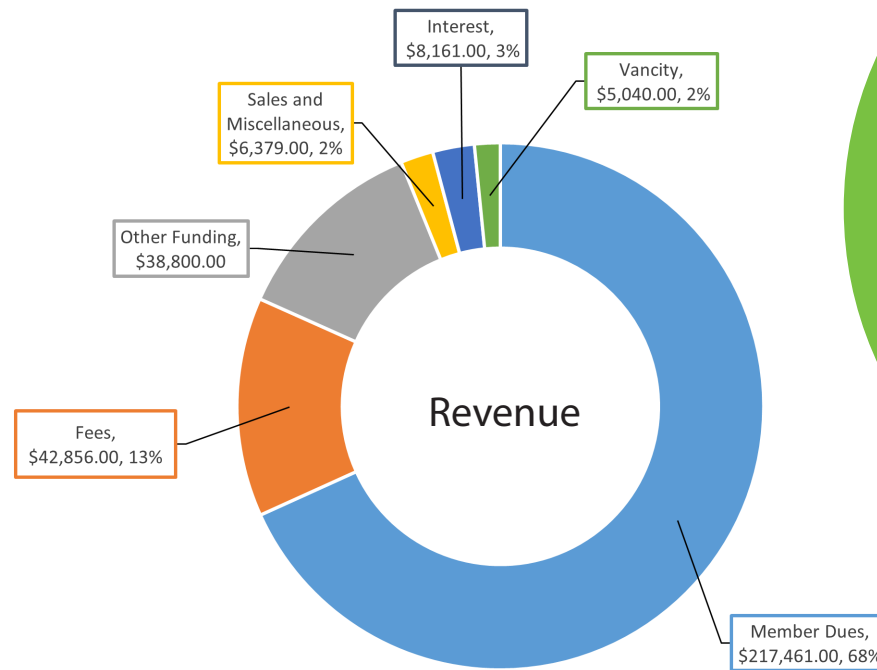
This positive outcome was partly due to innovative partnerships which helped to reduce our operating expenses, including:

- Vancity Credit Union, which provided the services of Andrea Harris as Executive Director on a secondment-basis;
- Alberta Co-operative and Community Association, where we shared their staff and services; and
- Realize Strategies Co-operative, where we were able to share their staff and facilities.

On the revenue side, Member Dues were \$217,461, a reduction of 12% from the previous year. This is a continuing concern as several members are indicating they are reconsidering the value their BCCA membership provides.

As a result, we are looking at ways to enhance our value proposition to meet members' expectations and for opportunities to diversify our revenue.

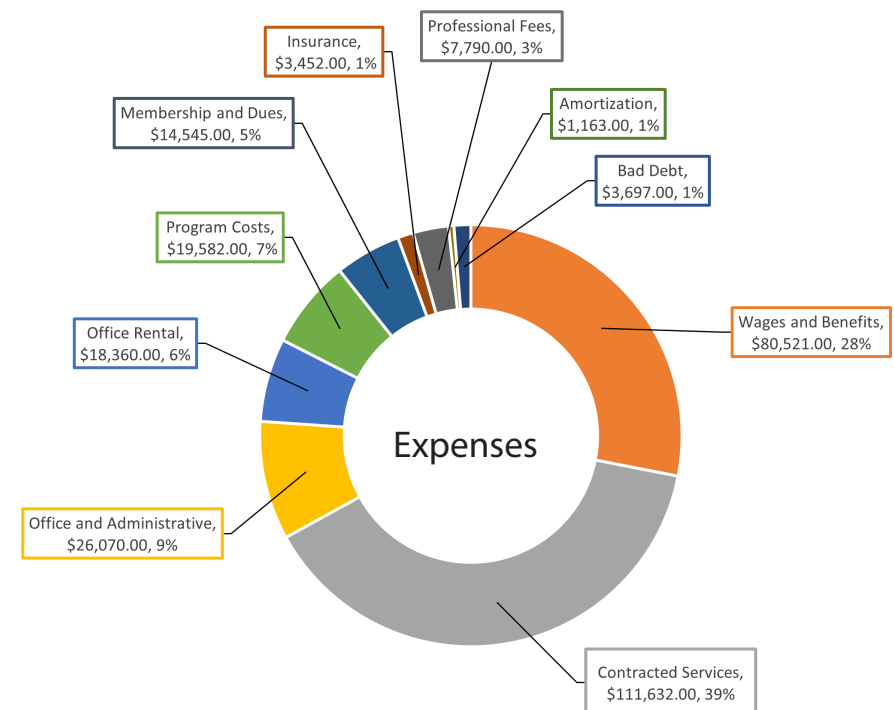
In addition to our members, we would like to thank our grant donors and event



sponsors for their generous support and look forward to strengthening these relationships in the coming years.

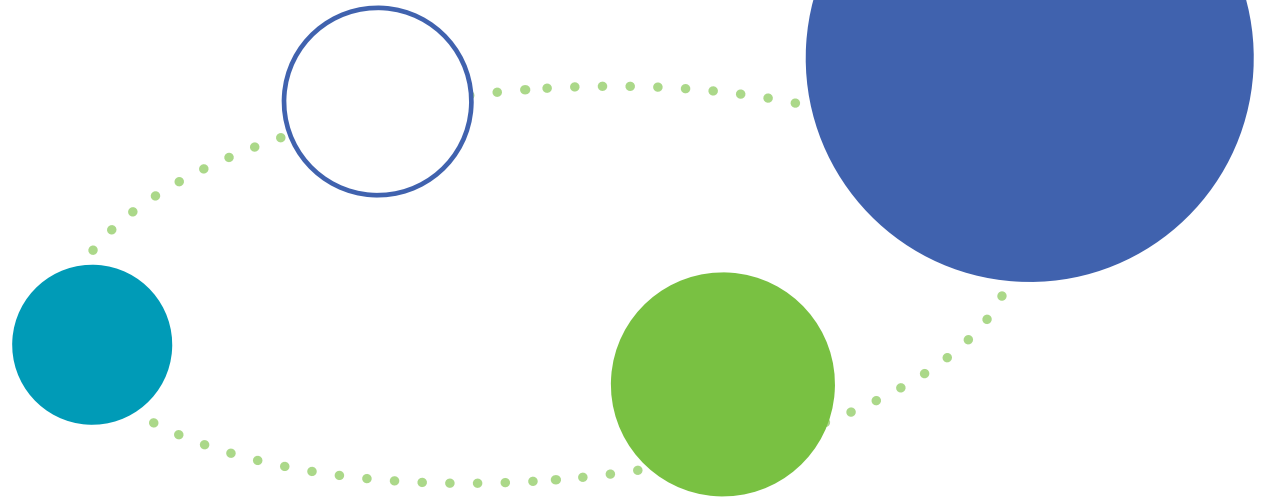
We also extend a special thanks to our sustaining members* and funders:

- CHF-BC*
- Central One*
- The Co-operators
- Coast Capital
- Federated Co-ops
- Realize Strategies
- Vancity*



Financials

Moving Forward



Despite the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the political and social unrest rocking our world, we are hopeful for the future. We are excited to build stronger ties with government and elected officials who are looking for alternatives to precarious work and a fragile social safety net.

We know growing and supporting co-ops are part of the solution and can provide new opportunities throughout the province in so many areas, including long-term seniors care, child care, business succession and food security.

We also know we have a lot to learn about racism and the experience of indigenous communities and communities of colour in the context of co-operation and the co-op movement. And we are committed to listening and connecting more deeply

with our members to understand how we can better harness the opportunities and demonstrate the value of being an association that represents such a diversity in sectors, size, age and geography.

Over the past few months, we're proud to have launched several new offerings to support our members in strengthening their co-op structure, including:

- A new Governance workshop for co-op boards
- Open educational resources for post-secondary institutions and youth groups
- On-line meet-ups to share knowledge and information regarding COVID and other issues
- Support for on-line AGMs.

We're delighted to be working more closely with the Alberta Community and Co-operative Association (ACCA) to not only share resources, but also to offer our members legal services.

As we build more offerings and share best practice around governance and co-op education, government relations and member engagement, we ask that you reach out to us – let us know if you see an opportunity where we can help your co-op or credit union – we'd love to hear from you.



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