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# CHICAGO MARKET

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A COMMUNITY

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CO  
OP



House  
Party  
Toolkit



***Dear Chicago Market Owner,***

Thank you for your assistance in growing our ownership base!

An invitation from a friend to share a meal, have a cup of tea, or enjoy after-dinner dessert while learning more about Chicago Market has proven to be one of the most effective ways to spread the word and further our mission to open a community-owned grocery store. This can be done one-on-one or in a group setting such as hosting a House Party for friends and family to come together and hear about us while enjoying good folks and fun.

The goal of this tool kit is to provide everything you need to make your House Party as successful and easy as possible. Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the content of this tool kit and contact us to schedule your event soon.

Many thanks,  
Your Chicago Market MORE\* Team & Board of Directors

*\*MORE = Marketing, Owner Recruitment, and Engagement*

# WHAT'S INSIDE

In this House Party Tool Kit you'll find:

## 1. House Party Information

- To-do checklist
- Building an invite list
- Invitation templates
- Follow up tips
- Sign In Sheets

## 2. Basic Information

- Cooperative principles
- Development timeline
- FAQs

Website: [www.chicagomarket.coop](http://www.chicagomarket.coop)

Contact: [info@chicagomarket.coop](mailto:info@chicagomarket.coop)



Local.



Sustainable.



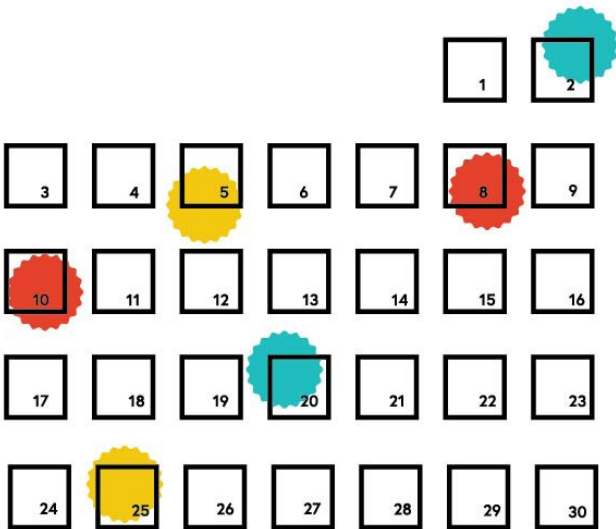
Yours.



# IT'S A HOUSE PARTY!

In this section you will find:

- Party Planning Checklist
- Invite and Party Theme Ideas
- Sample Invitations
- Thank You Note Templates
- Ideas for Following Up & Keeping Folks Engaged
- Ongoing Conversation Starters



# Party Planning Checklist

We want to help you have a successful and fun event! This checklist will help you organize the steps and also tells you what support Chicago Market can provide. If you think of additional items future hosts may find valuable, please let us know and we'll add them!

## Chicago Market To Do:

- Promote event on Facebook (if public)
- Supply Owner brochures, applications and display materials
- Bring a laptop for online sign up
- Attend the event and speak on behalf of Chicago Market

## Chicago Market and Host To Do Together:


- Schedule a pre-event meeting to discuss date, time, location and theme
- Pick a mutually agreeable date
- Agree on presentation style (example: formal 15-minute talk or a casual gathering where questions are answered as they arise)
- Schedule a post-event meeting to discuss how it went and any Chicago Market follow-up needed

## Host To-Do:

- Determine invite list (see ideas below if this is a challenge for you)
- Decide means of invitations (print, email, Facebook, etc.)
- Build online RSVP Event at the Chicago Market website – click "Host Your Own Event" at the bottom of the Event page [link: <https://www.chicagomarket.coop/events>]
- Work with Chicago Market to create invitation, if provided templates won't work for any reason
- Send invitations
- Consider sharing one of your recipes with guests. Print hard copies for them to take or include with thank you notes.
- Plan brief introduction of Chicago Market liaison to the group. Also consider telling 'your story' of why you became an Owner — it's a great kick-off to a house party.
- Send thank you notes.
- Consider a follow-up with individual attendees to answer any further questions, assist them with joining, etc.



## INVITE IDEAS



There's no 'ideal' size for a successful event, but you might consider inviting more people than you expect to show, simply to ensure a large enough group for active conversations and a good energy. In our experience, it's not hard to have a well-attended event: send out your invites early and follow up with a phone call! It can be as easy as that.

The first question, then, is who to invite? Here are some ideas that have helped other House Party hosts pull their invitation lists together:

**FAMILY:** Consider inviting any family members who live in the area: parents, kids, aunts, uncles, cousins...


**FRIENDS:** And don't forget about friends of your spouse or significant other.


**SOCIAL ACQUAINTANCES:** Friends from college/school; your former professors or teachers; friends from your old job or from a group where you used to volunteer.

**NEIGHBORS:** Next door, upstairs, down the hall, or the whole building; people on the block who you always run into when jogging, or walking the dog; your childcare collective, or the parents of your children's friends.

**FROM CHURCH, TEMPLE OR MOSQUE:** Your clergy person, minister, priest, rabbi, imam; regular church attendees and friends who may be not-so-regular attendees; the people you always share holidays with.

**FROM YOUR LABOR UNION:** Union leaders or activists; your steward, your business agent, other union staff; your co-workers.





**FROM WORK OR COMMUNITY WORK:** Colleagues; other people in the office, your clients, your supervisor; former clients, your former supervisor; people who used to work in the office but recently left; colleagues from community work or from charity work.

**MEMBERS OF:** Your homeowners' association; your Rotary or Kiwanis club; your kids' boy/girl scout troop; your community group; your parenting/mom's group; your book club; your local peace or environmental group; your local Indivisible chapter; the PTO; your local school board.


**PEOPLE YOU HANG OUT WITH:** Members of your bowling league, volleyball team, cooking group, pick-up basketball; the bridge club, your poker buddies; night classes, Lamaze class, Aerobics class, the gym; people you sing in choir with or go caroling with; people you shop with or garden with.

**PROFESSIONALS YOU KNOW PERSONALLY:** Your lawyer, dentist, doctor, pediatrician, hair stylist, pharmacist, broker, dry cleaner.

**PULL OUT PAST LISTS:** The invitation list to your last party; your Christmas card list; your personal phone book.

**COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS:** Think about the interesting people you've met who are active in our community. You may not know them well, but take a moment and invite them!

**OR WHAT ABOUT THIS:** Ask a friend to co-host the party with you — they invite half the people, you invite half the people, and together you'll have a great invite list.





## *Theme Ideas*

Your party doesn't have to have a theme, but sometimes it helps to determine your menu and fun ways to promote the event. Decide whatever works best for you! Here are some idea starters — have some fun!

- Spanish Tapas
- Dessert Party
- Wine & Cheese
- Fondue
- Backyard Barbeque
- Potluck Dinner
- Afternoon Tea
- Local Food Feast
- Taco Tuesday Fiesta
- Cocktails & Co-ops
- Catered from your favorite Local Restaurant
- Holiday Themed



## Invitations

Here is some sample text for an invitation to your event. This copy could work equally well as a printed invite or email.

### Sample invitation

*You're invited!*

*Maybe you've seen some Chicago Market yard signs... or you've heard friends and colleagues talking about this local, sustainable food co-op coming to the Gerber Building at the Wilson 'L' Station... But what exactly is Chicago Market and how can you support it?*

*Join us on (insert date and time) to learn why our community is excited about opening this community-owned grocery store.*

*We will be serving (food, drinks, dessert, etc.) and chatting about why a co-op is so important to our community. Owners will be on hand to answer your questions and tell you more about the Market. And we'll be prepared to sign up new Owners who are ready to buy a stake in this cooperative grocery store.*

*Save the date!  
(insert date and time)*

*Join us at:  
(123 Main Street  
Chicago, IL 60640)*

*Sincerely,  
(Owner Hosts)*

Local.

Sustainable.

Yours.



## Thank You Notes

Recruiting someone to be a Chicago Market Owner almost always takes more than one contact. Your event likely nudged several folks closer to Ownership, but follow-up after the event is an important step in helping folks move from interest to Ownership. See below for some follow-up tips that can help you keep folks engaged.

### A Thank You Note to the Group


The day after your gathering, send a simple group message via email or Facebook. This message keeps Chicago Market on your guests' minds a bit longer and reminds them of your enthusiasm for the project. If you use Facebook, we recommend that you send this as a group message rather than post it on a Facebook event page. Your guests will be more likely to see it in a message than on an event page.

#### Sample email/Facebook message:

*Thank you all so much for joining me for my Chicago Market get-together last night! I enjoyed a chance to spend time with you all and share some good food and laughs. I also appreciated the chance to explain to you why I'm so enthusiastic about Chicago Market. Please let me know if I can answer any more of your questions about the Co-op. I would be happy to do so. And just in case some of you are ready to come on board, here is the link to the online Ownership application: [www.chicagomarket.coop/join](http://www.chicagomarket.coop/join).*

*Here's to good food and community!*

In that message, you might also include a photo or two from the get together, a link to Chicago Market's Facebook or Instagram page, and a recipe for something that was served at the party, if appropriate.



## Thank You Notes to Individuals

- Ideally, you should write and send an individual thank you note to each attendee within 3 days of the event.
- A handwritten thank you note stands out because they are rare these days, so consider writing a thank you card or other handwritten note.
- We do have a Chicago Market letterhead template that you could print and use if you would like to do so.
- An emailed thank you note is okay if the invitation was sent via email. If you send an emailed thank you note, please be sure to include a link to the Co-op's website ([www.chicagomarket.coop](http://www.chicagomarket.coop))
- Thank you notes should be short and sweet; they don't have to be paragraphs long. 3–5 sentences is perfect.

You might also quickly debrief with the Chicago Market representative who attended your gathering to identify specific areas of follow-up for specific guests. This Chicago Market contact can also help you identify resources to address interests or concerns that may have come up for you or your guests.

Please see below for some sample individual thank you note messages you could use.

### Sample Thank You Note Message: General

*Thank you for attending my Chicago Market gathering! I appreciated the chance to have such good discussion about an organization I believe in. If you would like to talk more about Chicago Market, please let me know; I'd be happy to sit down for more conversation. I can also connect you with a Chicago Market board member to answer questions if you'd like. I believe we can make this happen, and I hope you'll consider joining this cooperative effort.*

*Many thanks,  
[your name here]*

## Sample Thank You Note Message: To a New Owner

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thanks so much for coming over [insert day of the week here] to learn a little more about Chicago Market. I hope you had as much fun as I did! I also wanted to personally thank you for becoming an owner. Together Chicago Market will accomplish great things and it's so nice to have you on board as part of our co-op community!

Thanks again,  
[your name here]

## Sample Thank You Note Message: Detailed Example

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for attending my Chicago Market gathering! I appreciated the chance to have such good discussion about an organization I believe in. You made some wonderful points last night about co-ops as community builders. I thought you might be interested in what other cooperative grocery stores are doing in that area. Here are a couple of links that might interest you (your Chicago Market liaison will get links for you!):

- [Link]

I think we can have the same kind of positive impact when Chicago Market opens. I hope you'll help us make that happen! Let me know if you have any more questions.

Many thanks,  
[your name here]



## Sample Thank You Note Message: Another Detailed Example

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

*Thanks so much for coming over [insert day of the week here] to learn a little more about Chicago Market. Supporting local business and local farmers is very important to me personally, and I hope that you'll consider becoming an owner for reasons of your own. If you didn't get an application at the party, you can apply online at [www.chicagomarket.coop](http://www.chicagomarket.coop).*

*Thanks again for coming!  
[your name here]*

Exchange "supporting local business and local farmers" in the template with your reason for becoming an Owner. Other reasons you could insert include:

- Fresh, local produce
- Good-paying, high-quality local jobs
- Being part of a community
- Having a one-stop place for grocery needs





## Sample Thank You Note Message: Another Detailed Example

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

*Thank you for attending my Chicago Market gathering! I appreciated the chance to have such good discussion about an organization I believe in. You seemed particularly interested in how Chicago Market might support local farmers. I wanted to share the incredible impact local farmers have experienced in the Champaign-Urbana region through Urbana's Common Ground Food Co-op's (CGFC) growth the last few years.*


*Here's some more information about that:*

- Within five years of becoming a full-service grocery, Common Ground Food Co-op provided \$1 million to local food producers*

- CGFC is directly responsible for a number of area family farms being able to remain in business, and even increase production.*

- Farmers have an outlet for their produce year-round, instead of relying on seasonal farmers' markets.*

*We have such great local farms right here in the Chicagoland area, and Chicago Market will support their growth and financial stability in the same way that Common Ground Food Cooperative does for its farmers. I believe we can make this happen, and I hope you'll help us get there! Let me know if you have any more questions.*



## Keeping Engaged

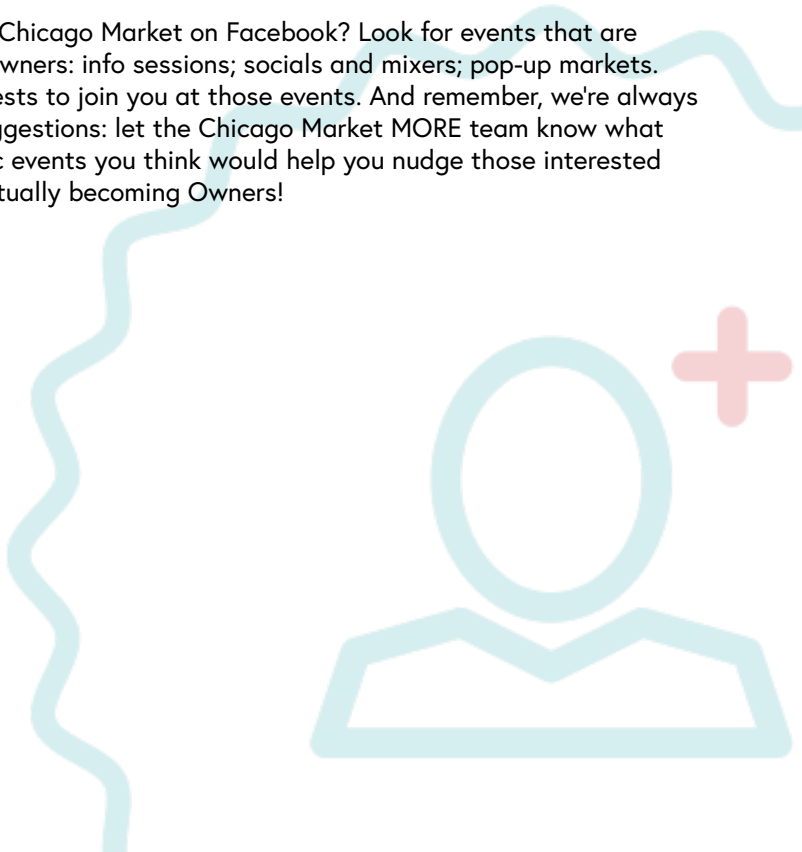
Some of your guests will need several Chicago Market encounters before they are ready to join us. For your guests who seem interested but are not quite ready, you can help facilitate those informal encounters in the couple months following your gathering.

### Here are some options:

Heading to the Dill Pickle Food Co-op for a bit of shopping? Invite a couple of your guests to join you for the shopping trip. It's a fantastic way to let them experience what it is we're trying to build here in Uptown.

Do you regularly visit a local farmers market? Do you take advantage of the Green City Market in Lincoln Park? Do you have another farmer's market where you like to meet local farmers? Invite one of your guests to join you; talk to the farmers about Chicago Market together; and if Chicago Market has a table at the market, stop by and say hello!

Do you follow Chicago Market on Facebook? Look for events that are open to non-Owners: info sessions; socials and mixers; pop-up markets. Invite your guests to join you at those events. And remember, we're always looking for suggestions: let the Chicago Market MORE team know what types of public events you think would help you nudge those interested guests into actually becoming Owners!





Forward them our newsletter... and invite them to sign up to receive it themselves. It's another great way to ensure they see the ongoing activities and hopefully they'll get caught up in the action.

Did you see an article about a co-op grocery, an issue related to the organic food industry, or local farming methods? Stories about people re-engaging with fresh, local food are making headline news these days so reach out to your friends and former guests with a link and a quick note about how they may find the article interesting! You can also find wonderful articles and engaging videos on [www.strongertogether.coop](http://www.strongertogether.coop). Here's a favorite article that might hit home for some of our potential owners: [I Own a Grocery Store with Some Friends!](#)

Send them an informative and fun video link. Sometimes pictures and a great script can explain better than anything! Stronger Together offers this beautifully done video that tells exactly 'What's to love about a food co-op.'

[What's to Love about Food Co-ops?](#)

Finally, keep your Chicago Market liaison posted! They are ready to work with you to move your guests from interest to Ownership after your gathering.



## Conversation Starters


As you identify friends, colleagues, or acquaintances who might be interested in Chicago Market, keep some conversation starters ready to go so you can bring up the Co-op in conversation or find ways to connect your friends' interests to what the Co-op will offer. You can use these to start conversations with those who might invite to your house party, or as ways to continue connecting with them after your house party. Either way, keep Chicago Market front of mind for your friends! The more they hear about us, they more likely they are to think seriously about joining.

### **Below are some suggestions for introducing a friend to details about Chicago Market.**

Is your friend a big supporter of 'Buy Local'? It doesn't get any more 'local' than a food co-op. Area farmers are given preference when buying produce; profits stay in the community as patronage and outreach; co-ops typically donate more to local services than conventional stores.

Does your friend like to frequent Farmers' Markets? Co-ops support these farmers and helps them earn more and ramp up production. The quality food they purchase at a Farmers' Market can be available every day of the week and throughout the year!





Did your friend move here from another community that had a cooperative grocery? If someone is already familiar with how awesome a food co-op can be, they're usually eager to hear we're opening one here.

Does your friend support initiatives such as living wage? Cooperatives pay an average of \$1 more per hour than conventional stores, and more employees qualify for benefits, too.


Does your friend ever complain it's hard to find quality produce at our local stores? Chicago Market can fix that problem!

Does your friend value healthy eating and cooking? So does Chicago Market! Healthy food choices and recipes will be available throughout the store; we will have transparency about how the foods we carry are produced; and we hope to offer community classes on topics such as healthy cooking or how to use unfamiliar foods.

Is your friend 'a foodie' who appreciates the better flavors of fresh, quality food? Fresh food tastes better and maintains more nutrients. Since our food doesn't spend weeks being transported to the store, 'foodies' will love shopping at Chicago Market.

Is your friend interested in sustainability issues? Organic and sustainable farming practices will be a focus at Chicago Market. Shorter transportation distances reduce pollution. The preservation of our food infrastructure is the most truly 'sustainable' thing we can do! We also have a Zero Waste/Sustainability Committee working to ensure that everything from our store design to our operational practices align with our sustainability goals and values.

Does your friend have any dietary restrictions (such as gluten, dairy, etc.)? Specialty food items and the need for clear labeling with regards to allergens will be a key benefit.



Does your friend have kids who require a special diet to help with medical conditions, allergies, ADHD, etc.? Seeking out special foods and recipes can be challenging. Chicago Market's grocery selection and clear labeling can help them get all these things in one place.

Does your friend enjoy being active in community initiatives? They should LOVE this one, then. Not only will Chicago Market contribute to the economic strength of our community, but our 'cooperative community' is also a vibrant group of people to join!

Does your friend frequently post articles about organic farming or sustainable food issues? Many of our current owners cite the desire to support organic farmers as a reason they've joined. Chicago Market will raise awareness and demand for sustainably grown food throughout our area, and producers will step up to meet that demand.

Is your friend involved in working with underprivileged or low-income families? Chicago Market plans to accept services like SNAP and LINK, and to offer other services or opportunities for economically-diverse customers as many of our co-op brethren do, including sponsored or reduced-price Ownerships, and more. Also, Owners will have input to determine outreach initiatives, which can include any number of programs designed to assist underprivileged families. We have also been building partnerships with Uptown organizations supporting these members of our community.

Does your friend use terms like 'food justice', or 'food deserts'? Then it sounds like they're already pretty well-versed on issues that are also important to many Chicago Market owners. Becoming an Owner helps us open our store sooner, which benefits everyone in the community.



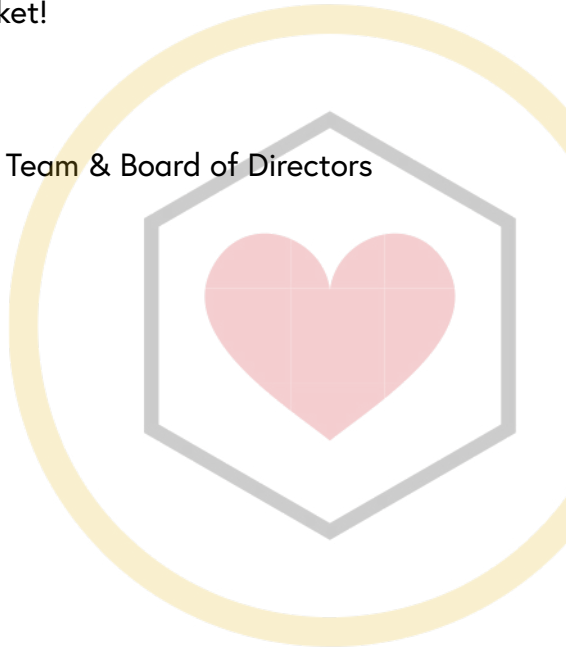
## THANK YOU!

Again, thank you for your assistance in growing our Ownership base! Chicago Market, and co-ops in general, are about building community. We're grateful you've been inspired to reach out to your network and invite people you know to become part of this project.

We hope this Tool Kit has given you the ideas and tools to make hosting a House Party easy and fun. If you have any questions that have not been answered by content in this Tool Kit, please reach out to us for assistance at [info@chicagomarket.coop](mailto:info@chicagomarket.coop).

We look forward to meeting your friends and sharing our passion about Chicago Market!

Many thanks,  
Your Chicago Market MORE Team & Board of Directors



# 7 SEVEN COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

1. Voluntary and open membership.
2. Democratic member control.
3. Member economic participation.
4. Autonomy and independence.
5. Education, training and information.
6. Cooperation among co-operatives
7. Concern for community.

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

Open to all without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

## **2. Democratic Member Control**

One member, one vote.

## **3. Member Economic Participation**

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. The economic benefits of a cooperative operation are returned to the members, reinvested in the co-op, or used to provide member services.

## **4. Autonomy and Independence**

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.

## **5. Education, Training and Information**

Cooperatives provide education and training for members so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

## **6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives**

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

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

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

[7 Reasons to Believe in \(and Become an Owner of\) Chicago Market - A Community Co-op!](#) – blog post that describes how Chicago Market aligns with the 7 Cooperative Principles

## Mission & Purpose

We are building a better food community. Powered by our Owners, we create and strengthen local food connections that are honest, accessible, educational and inspiring. We are a cooperative grocery store -- but more than that, we're a gathering place and vibrant community resource.

## Vision

A better food community --  
local, sustainable, connected.

## Values

We value: Relationships, Ownership, Sustainability, Accountability and Joy.

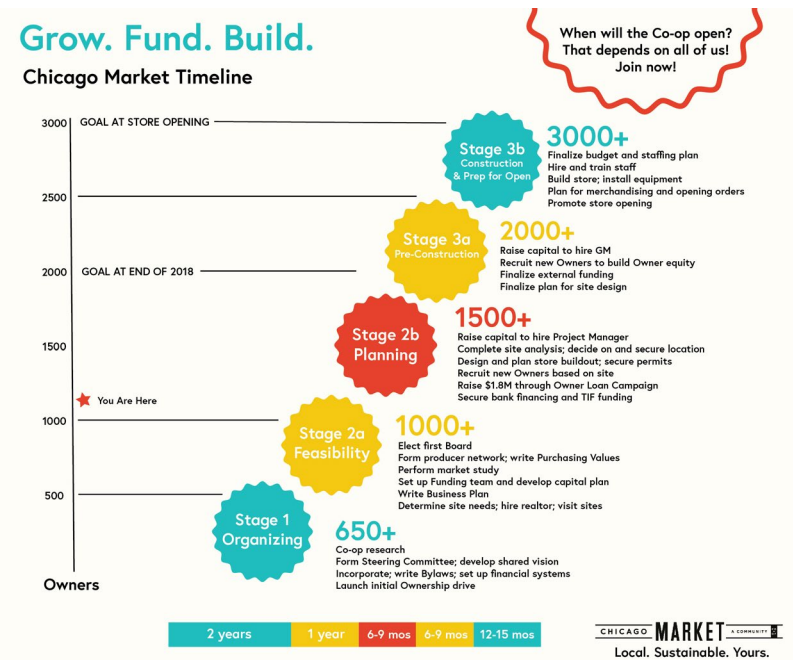


# Development Timeline

We are excited to have the Gerber Building at the Wilson 'L' Station as the site for Chicago Market. But now the work begins. To fund the store, we need to have 2,000 Owners by the end of 2018.

Other milestones and the amount of time we expect it will take us to reach each milestone are based on the number of Owners needed to open the size store we are targeting and the estimated time for build out.

Your support is needed to make the store a reality, so thank you for helping recruit new Owners!







## Frequently Asked Questions

No one expects you to know everything! Below are questions we hear most often, along with some simple answers. More detailed information may also be available on the Chicago Market website, or from a Board member.

### Basic Questions

#### What is a Co-op Grocery Store?

Our co-op grocery store will be a full-service grocery store voluntarily owned and operated by the people who use it: Owners, who purchase equity shares in the Co-op. It will be operated for the benefit of Owners, to meet their mutual needs and values. Everyone is welcome to shop at our grocery store.

#### What makes a co-op grocery store different from a regular grocery?


A co-op operates using the 7 Cooperative Principles, which are:

1. voluntary and open membership,
2. democratic member control,
3. member economic participation,
4. autonomy & independence,
5. education, training and information,
6. cooperation among cooperatives, and
7. concern for community.

#### How will a co-op grocery impact my local economy?

Cooperatives keep economic benefits within the community by creating jobs and supporting local producers and suppliers whenever possible. Profit is not siphoned off by outside interests and profit is never put before the needs of owners.

The Common Ground Food Co-op in Urbana provided \$150,000 for local producers in 2007, its first year as a full-service grocery store. In 2012, that number grew to \$1 million in revenue to local producers. Common Ground Food Co-op also provides high quality jobs with available benefits to over 70 employees.



## **How will Chicago Market impact other local grocery stores?**

The demand for local products in Chicago is substantial. Historically, opening a food co-op increases business for existing local/organic food stores. 'A rising tide raises all ships' and our intent is to grow the natural food industry and support local growers and producers in Chicagoland by providing an outlet for distributing their goods.

## **About Chicago Market: A Community Co-op**

### **What have you done so far?**

Chicago Market held its first public meetings to determine interest in the project in 2013. We launched to the public in 2014 and elected our first Board of Directors. Since then we've finalized our business plan, hosted numerous community meetings and information sessions, conducted two different market studies (most recently in December 2017), created our site criteria, outlined our Purchasing Values, put in a bid to the CTA to procure the site at the Gerber building, reached and surpassed the 1,000 Owner mark, and in May 2018 finally signed a lease with the CTA for our ideal site. This would not have been possible without hours of dedication from our volunteer board members and many key volunteers with the Market over the years. We continue to work tirelessly to gain the needed ownership base to move forward with the design and construction of our dream grocery store.

### **What does Ownership entail and how do I become an Owner?**

Chicago Market is member-owned, but open to all shoppers. Owners receive a variety of benefits — both financial and in control over the direction of the Market. You'll be a key player in building the co-op community and changing the local food landscape.

In order to make this store a reality, Chicago Market needs 3000 Owners before the Uptown location opens. Without your support, this store can't happen.

Ownership is a one-time commitment, a \$250 or \$500 investment, that covers your whole household. The \$250 (Founding Owner) or \$500 (Cultivating Owner) levels provide the same benefits and rights; we offer the Cultivating Owner level for those who feel that much more strongly that they'd like to see us get started and succeed, and we'll create a special acknowledgement for these folks in our store. Both investment amounts are payable in one lump sum or in installments.

More information about Ownership is available on our [website](#).

### **Where will Chicago Market be located?**

Chicago Market will be located at the Wilson CTA stop, at the corner of Wilson and Broadway. The beautiful historic Gerber Building will provide a convenient shopping location for customers from all over the city, and will have easy access to transit as well as parking. We love this space for its accessibility, its unique history, its size, and its ability to deliver on our mission to create a local, sustainable and connected food community.

### **Additional Information**

More answers to frequently asked questions about Chicago Market can be found on our website at [www.chicagomarket.coop/faqs](http://www.chicagomarket.coop/faqs).





# Contact us.

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For more information, go to our website:  
[chicagomarket.coop](http://chicagomarket.coop)

Contact us directly at [info@chicagomarket.coop](mailto:info@chicagomarket.coop)

Reach out to us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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