

Highlights & Impacts

2,500 sq. ft.

membership-owned retail space.

\$2.5 million

total project costs.

70

local farmers and vendors supply the co-op.

45

jobs saved and created.

180%

increase in sales to \$2.7 million after expansion.

62%

growth in co-op membership to 1,542 members since expansion.

Profile: Mariposa Food Co-op Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Founded in 1971 as a buyers' club with a few dozen members, [Mariposa Food Co-op](#) today operates as a full-service, cooperatively-owned and -operated grocery store with more than 1,500 members. For years, Mariposa's growth and financial viability was constrained by the 500-square-foot store which limited the types of produce and other products offered. In 2007, Mariposa members decided to expand and began what would become a five-year capital project to convert a vacant bank building into a 2,500-square-foot food store with meeting space for community programs. The co-op also voted to approve non-member shopping for the new store.

The biggest challenge was convincing people that this imagined, fabulous new co-op was going to become a reality. We were making a huge shift organizationally, culturally, and financially. Despite the pretty architectural renderings, it took a lot of convincing that we were prepared..."

Leah Pillsbury, Former Capital Campaign Coordinator

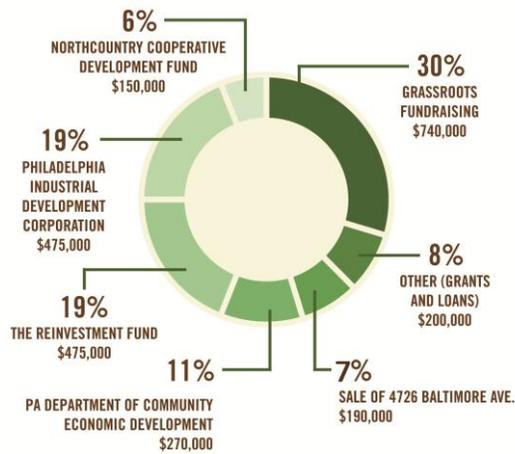
Mariposa Food Co-op raised \$2.5 million to buy, design, and renovate the building through a combination of grants, loans, and grassroots fund-raising. The co-op raised \$740,000 from individuals in small amounts. One hundred members, neighbors, and local business people provided loans ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000. In addition, over 700 members increased their financial investment or member equity in the co-op and the co-op attracted 450 new members.

Mariposa opened in its new location on March 17, 2012. The food co-op now offers a large selection of healthy, locally grown, sustainably produced foods, and other products. With considerably more space and more customers, sales nearly doubled, and membership grew by 62 percent. During the first four full quarters in the new store, sales totaled nearly \$3.4 million, and in 2013, sales are up more than 40 percent compared to last year's equivalent. Non-member purchases account for nearly half of these sales.

[Mariposa's expansion has meant a significant transformation](#) for the co-op organizationally, the Baltimore Avenue where the store is located, and the regional economy. Mariposa currently employs 45 people, making them one of the neighborhood's largest employers. Residential vacancies near the co-op have declined, home values have improved, and new businesses have opened. Some 70 local farmers and vendors benefit from Mariposa's increased buying power, including two urban farms in West Philadelphia.

"Not only will Mariposa's new store increase access to healthy food, but they are doing so in a way that keeps dollars local and creates jobs."

Monica Allison, Board President, Cedar Park Neighbors



The food co-op also supports numerous community projects, including the Urban Nutrition Initiative, which engages, educates, and empowers neighborhood youth to lead healthy lifestyles and build a sustainable food system. Mariposa is an active leader in the cooperative movement, working with start-up and mature food co-ops to improve service to members and grow the Philadelphia cooperative movement.

Sources of Project Funds



For more information about the Healthy Food Access Portal, contact us at info@healthyfoodaccess.org.