

MONTAVILLA FOOD CO-OP AWARDED GRANT IN NATIONAL COMPETITION, GROWS TO 500 MEMBER-OWNERS

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Montavilla Food Co-op (MFC) has been awarded a significant and highly competitive grant from Food Co-op Initiative (FCI), a national organization that supports start-up co-op initiatives across the United States. The grant includes a \$5,000 cash award, mentoring, a site visit from a co-op development expert and other cooperative development resources. MFC will use the funds to develop financial projections, improve volunteer management and grow membership.

This is the second time that MFC is receiving the annual award from FCI. “This is a very select group,” said FCI Executive Director Stuart Reid. “We are only able to provide funding to a limited number of deserving co-ops, but MFC had such tremendous success with their award last year that we made the unusual decision of awarding a second grant.”

MFC is a grassroots, volunteer-led effort to build a cooperatively owned grocery store in Montavilla that will supply healthy food, support local farmers and producers, build community wealth and advance

sustainability initiatives in Montavilla. “In 2015, with FCI’s support and mentorship, MFC completed its market feasibility study, added a record number of new member-owners and strengthened internal capacity,” reports MFC President Amanda Lamb. “This year, we’re celebrating the significant milestone of welcoming our 500th member-owner, finalizing our financial projections and recruiting and training a larger team of volunteers to help with internal readiness and increase the pace of member-ownership growth.”

“The public interest in food co-ops is at an all-time high,” notes Reid. “By owning and controlling their own cooperative store, communities are able to ensure stable access to healthy food, provide meaningful jobs, and support local producers. Food co-ops can become both an economic anchor and a social hub for the community.” Award winners were selected based on the strength of their leadership, quality of business planning, potential for successful operations, and potential impact made by the grant funds. □ □

The mission of the Montavilla Food Cooperative is to connect the east Portland community to healthy food, support local farmers and producers, build community wealth and advance sustainability initiatives all within a centrally located, cooperative grocery. www.Montavilla.coop

Food Co-op Initiative is a non-profit 501(c)3 created to encourage and support new food co-op development. The Seed Grant program is made possible through a USDA Rural Cooperative Development Grant and major funding from the Blooming Prairie Foundation, National Cooperative Bank, National Co+op Grocers, and the food co-op community. www.foodcoopinitative.coop