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## Ontario's Local Organic Food Co-ops receive \$73, 492 from the Local Food Fund for Regional Food Hub Expansion Project May 7, 2014

On April 26, 2014, while the [Ontario Natural Food Co-op](#) hosted its Annual General Meeting, Premier Kathleen Wynne announced the Co-operative as one of the lucky [recipients of a grant from the Local Food Fund](#).

The Ontario Natural Food Co-op has been the incubator and umbrella supporting the [Local Organic Food Co-ops \(LOFC\) Network](#) for the past three years, through which food and farm co-ops across the province of Ontario have been supported in their emergence and development. In the last three years, the Network has expanded from approximately 20 to nearly 70 co-operative food enterprises, ranging from farms and distributors to retailers and cafés.

“We see co-operatives playing a vital role in a more local, sustainable food economy,” says Randy Whitteker, General Manager of the Ontario Natural Food Co-op, “We’re very happy to be partnering with the province to support the emergence of local food co-ops.”

The funding will provide four regional co-operative lead organizations (members of the LOFC Network) to host a series of regional forums on local organic food co-operative development, while supporting these leads to expand their capacity as regional food hubs through targeted business planning, leadership and governance training. These co-operative leads include the [True North Community Co-op](#) in Thunder Bay, [Eat Local Sudbury Co-op](#) in Sudbury, [On the Move Organics](#) in London, and the [Ottawa Valley Food Co-op](#) in Pembroke.

Additionally, the funding will support the LOFC Network in the redevelopment of its business and strategic plan, as well as the strengthening of regional food-based economies as ONFC continues to explore local sources of local foods for its [private label](#) brand.



The LOFC Network prides itself on its ability to offer its members education and training, networking, and capacity building opportunities, and looks forward to making use of the Local Food Fund grant as an opportunity to showcase a co-operative approach to developing resilient local food systems by cultivating co-operative food hubs as regional centres of excellence.

For more information, please visit our website:  
<http://cultivatingfoodcoops.net>.

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