

# FAQS

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 Green Top website, from a Board member or Outreach liaison.

## Basic Questions

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What is a Co-op Grocery Store?

A co-op grocery store is 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 a co-op 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.

## Questions regarding community impact

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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 Green Top Grocery impact other local grocery stores?

The demand for local products in Bloomington-Normal is substantial. Our market study indicates that current demand exceeds the supply of these goods. 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 in central Illinois.

## Questions about Green Top Grocery

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What have you done so far?

Green Top Grocery has grown from an idea to a corporation in just over a year, requiring hours of dedication from a volunteer interim board.

We've raised \$35,000 in "Seed Starter" funds to help cover consultation fees, incorporation costs and legal fees. We've also been awarded a \$10,000 grant allowing us to hire our first employee, our Outreach Coordinator.

And, we've jump-started our Ownership Campaign and have come a long way in securing the 1,825 owners necessary to open our store.

What does ownership entail and how do I become an owner?

Owners will have an impact on the foundation of our store and will help determine owner benefits, location and products offered.

**All owners contribute \$200** for an equity share. This amount is payable in one lump sum or in installments. Financial assistance is also available to help offset the cost of ownership.

More information about ownership is available on our website: [www.greentopgrocery.com](http://www.greentopgrocery.com).

Where will the store be located?

**Our first 500 owners will determine where the store is located.** Will you be one of these founding owners? Our Board of Directors will work with real estate and industry professionals to secure a location that meets the requirements important to our owners. *Become an owner today and tell us where you want **your** store to be located!*

When will the store open?

**The store will open when we have enough owners.**

Our goal is to have 500 owners by the end of 2013, ahead of the schedule predicted by industry trends. That will allow us to begin researching site & financing options early in 2014, which means a store would open sometime after that... but it really all depends on potential owners like YOU!