



**Local. Organic.
Exceptional Food.**
La Montañita Food Coop



Downtown Colorado, Inc.

La Montañita Food Co-Op Case Study

What is La Montañita?

La Montañita is a community-owned grocery and regional food distribution center based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. It was formed in 1976 with 300 members. Over the last 45 years, the organization has expanded to serving 16,000 members throughout 4 locations:

- Gallup,
- Albuquerque (x2)
- Santa Fe

The Co-Op offers a grocery store with locally sourced fruit, vegetables, meat, and cheese, but also has deli chefs and catering opportunities. They are committed to ethical business practices and participatory management from both members and Board of Directors.

The stores strive to become a community hub for all. While members do receive more benefits (see below), the store is free for all to shop at. While most food is sourced from New Mexico, if certain goods are not produced in the state the co-op works to find the closest and most socially and environmentally conscious local farm to

Mission Statement

"Provide to our member-owners, at the lowest price possible, exemplary customer service, environmentally sound products, and the highest quality natural and organic food."

Seven Principles of the Co-Op

The Co-Op upholds these seven principles throughout their work, stores, and membership ethos:

- Voluntary and Open Membership
- Democratic Member Control
- Member Economic Participation
- Autonomy and Independence
- Education, Training and Information
- Cooperation among Cooperatives
- Concern for Community

Governance & Membership

Currently 9 Board of Directors govern La Montañita Co-Op using a process called Policy Governance. The model emphasizes, "the board's role in clearly stating what the organization is to accomplish while avoiding unacceptable actions" (lamontanita.coop/board-of-directors).

The board is elected by Co-Op members and set the vision and mission for the organization. All members are eligible to run for the board. Their meetings are once and month and all members are able to attend. Meeting minutes are publicly published online for viewing.

Services

Grocery Store

While the public can shop at the stores, members get a number of benefits:

- Owner discount days and months
- Special orders
- Member patronage refund program
- Grocery delivery for seniors, homebound people, and differently-abled owners

The membership costs \$15 a year or \$200 for a lifetime membership.

Food Distribution

The Co-Op has a food distribution center that helps small and medium farms across New Mexico have greater access to wholesale markets. More than 1,000 different farms and businesses participate.

The center also has commercial kitchens for members to use for light manufacturing and distribution.



the bean Spring 2021



the bean Summer 2021



the bean Fall 2021



the bean Winter 2022



the bean Spring 2020



the bean Summer 2020



the bean Fall 2020



the bean Winter 2021



the bean Spring 2019



the bean Summer 2019



the bean Fall 2019



the bean Winter 2020

Communication

La Montañita has effective communication via their monthly publication, "The Bean." It offers updates from the Board, recipes, event announcements, and local farm spotlights.

La Montañita FUND

Established in 2010, the micro-loan fund was created to strengthen the local economy and food system. Members can either invest or apply for a loan. The FUND has made almost \$100,000 in loans throughout the state.

Community Building

The Co-Op serves as a member and community hub with a wide variety of events such as social hours, seminars, artisan fairs, gardening, and cooking classes. Most are free with membership.

