

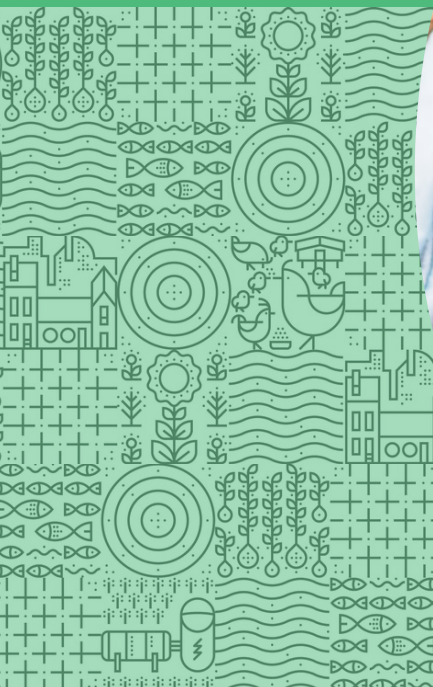
ANNUAL REPORT



PLANT
CHICAGO

2018

convening
co-creating
open sourcing
co-location



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

2018 was in many ways a banner year for Plant Chicago. We started the year by completing our first ever strategic plan, with a revised mission and vision statement that clearly articulates the need for our organization to expand our reach beyond the confines of *The Plant*.

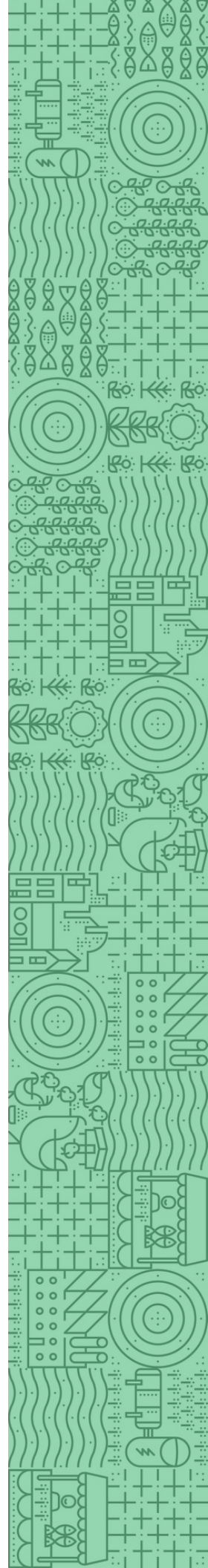
Our mission is to cultivate local circular economies. We envision a paradigm shift in production, consumption, and waste driven at the local level, generating equity and economic opportunity for all residents.

Our refined mission and vision have led to some big shifts! After 7 incredible years, Plant Chicago transferred the popular "tour of The Plant" program to the owner/operator of the facility, Bubbly Dynamics. Bubbly Dynamics can now take the lead on marketing *The Plant*, allowing Plant Chicago to focus resources on mission aligned programming. Thank you to all of the Plant Chicago staff and volunteers who invested a great deal of time, resources, and passion into facility tours over the years! As a tenant of *The Plant*, our organization will continue to be a vital presence in the building as we grow and expand our horizons.

We're starting by working closer with our neighbors both in the building and Back of the Yards, as well as organizations that are developing circular economies globally. We're partnering with groups in the Back of the Yards community to offer a diverse array of free educational programs, and our year-round market will now include locations within local churches and community centers. At the global level, we're working with companies and representatives from municipal governments through the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's CE 100 network to help build a circular economy toolkit for small businesses. We're also excited to be revamping our farm and mycology labs to be a resource to community members, hobbyists, and early stage entrepreneurs.

If you supported Plant Chicago in the past year, either through volunteering your time or donating money, thank you! What follows is a snapshot of some the amazing outcomes from your support.

JONATHAN PEREIRA
Executive Director



NEW MISSION + VISION

Plant Chicago's mission is to cultivate local circular economies. We envision a paradigm shift in production, consumption, and waste driven at the local level, generating equity and economic opportunity for all residents.

- *We convene diverse perspectives that would not otherwise have a forum in the circular economy space.*
- *We co-create circular economic systems with our neighbors.*
- *We offer open-source, accessible information to the public.*
- *We are co-located with some of Chicago's most innovative small food businesses that share our values.*

photo by David Belkin



photo by Kris Lensmeyer

OPEN FARM HOURS

In 2018 we opened our indoor aquaponic farm to the public for free every Saturday. Plant Chicago's farm is now an experimental space for a diversity of waste reuse projects. Over 1,000 people visited the farm and learned more about indoor growing, making plates from coffee chaff, and the potential for meal worms to break down plastics.

EDUCATION

Closed Loop Labs are hands-on workshops that engage K-12 students from the Chicago region with circular economy principles and make connections between economic and ecological systems.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2018 Plant Chicago reached over 3,600 K-12 students through Closed Loop Labs
- 28% of these programs were offered for free to groups that could not afford a fee



photo credit: Bogan High School



photo credit: GEMS World Academy

FUTURE CIRCULAR ECONOMY PIONEERS

"The [Closed Loop] Lab on many levels was inquiry based, hands on, engaging and challenging... Today was life changing for me and will no doubt be on the top of the list for my students' all-time favorite field trips!"

- Suzanne Giacotto, Guerin College Prep

SMALL BUSINESS + CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Our small business program supports small businesses to engage in circular economy principles while improving their bottom line.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Created over 24 different revenue generating opportunities for small business partners, including markets and co-branded workshops.
- Our small business partners made over \$4,000 in additional revenue through co-branded workshops!
- We hosted monthly circular economy sessions for our small business partners to share knowledge and resources.
- We collaborated with our research partners at IIT to conduct waste audits of 6 of our small business partners. The audit of Closed Loop Farms found that 98% of the materials being used in their production were be reused or recaptured.



LOCAL CIRCULAR ECONOMY COMMUNITY

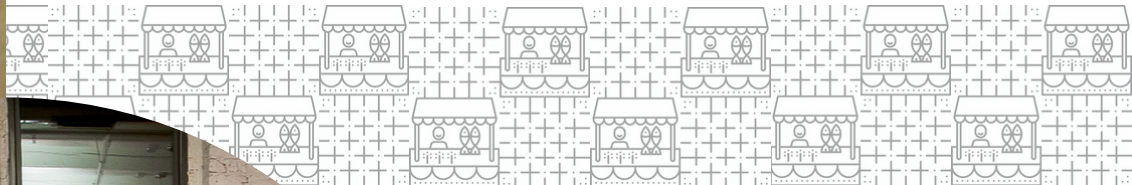
"It was very useful and informative to our business to have a statistical breakdown of our waste stream. We plan to use this data for marketing as well as grant writing in the near future!"

Adam Pollack, Closed Loop Farms

MARKETS

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2018, we shifted our markets to once a month. Over 5,000 people attended.
- Plant Chicago worked with over 35 vendors, close to 70% of which are women and/or minority owned.
- Per-market revenue doubled for vendors compared to 2017.
- Over 80% of the materials generated at the market were diverted from the landfill.
- Temo's Tamales became the first vendor to go 100% compostable!



CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRACTITIONER

"[Plant Chicago's market] has given me the opportunity to create much needed income for my family. [It is] truly an incubator for businesses that otherwise would never be able to get help through conventional methods."

- Temo Rivera, Temo's Tamales

RESEARCH

Early stage entrepreneurs and hobbyists need resources, knowledge, and networks to be successful. Our research program focuses on open-sourcing information and leveraging shared knowledge, resources, and infrastructure to provide support to early stage entrepreneurs, hobbyists, and academic researchers.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Research interns worked on exciting waste diversion projects including coffee chaff plates, fish feed from meal worms, and bio-based paint. We open sourced over 20 different circular economy papers and reports online!



CIRCULAR ECONOMY RESEARCHER

"Plant Chicago has been instrumental in conducting [industrial symbiosis] research by facilitating communication between researchers and the small businesses at The Plant. Plant Chicago's team are great collaborators, helping to co-create research that is meaningful and impactful for businesses and in the neighboring communities..."

- Dr. Weslynn Ashton, IIT Stuart School of Business

SPECIAL EVENTS



- We honored IIT Stuart School of Business and IIT Institute of Design for their innovative cross-sector thought leadership on local circular systems.



- Plant Chicago was given a United Nations Association award for Sustainable Development Goal #11: "make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".



- Plant Chicago co-hosted the first ever "Degrowth US" summit, which took a critical look at the practicality of economies based on unlimited growth.



CLOSED LOOP FORUM AND FESTIVAL

The first of its kind, the forum gathered local researchers, circular economy practitioners, and Chicagoans from all backgrounds for a day of discussions, poster sessions, art, music, and food. Over 500 people were in attendance!



LOOKING AHEAD

In 2019 we are...

- Setting aggressive landfill diversion goals in our programs and with our small business partners. By the end of 2019, 90% of the materials from our workshops and at our markets will be diverted from the landfill.

With support from the Robert and Toni Bader Foundation and Patagonia, we are piloting a local circular economy network for small businesses. In the first year, this will involve:

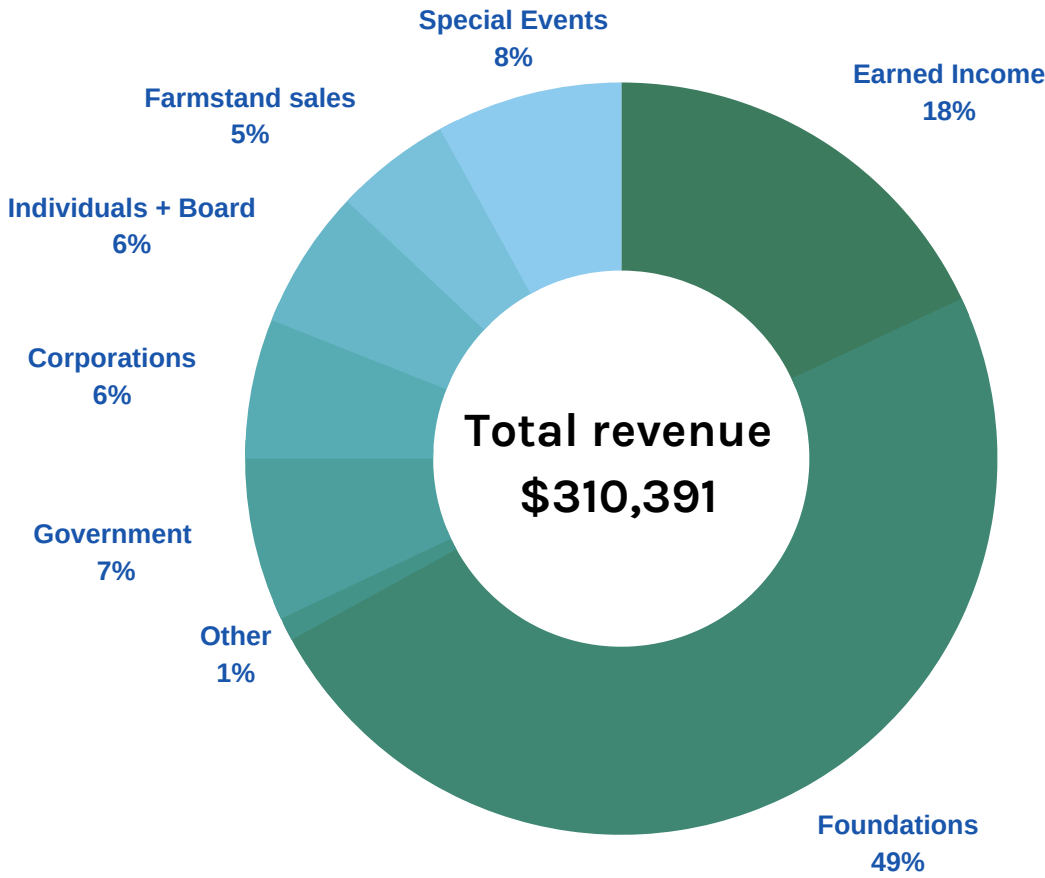
- Launching the “Social Mycology” project, which is pooling resources for early stage entrepreneurs and hobbyists who are creating products from fungi.
- Creating a “Circular Economy Toolkit for Small Businesses”; a collaboration with IIT and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

With support from the USDA we are growing our network of local markets. In the first year, this will involve:

- Co-hosting 12 off-site markets in the Back of the Yards community, in addition to our monthly markets at *The Plant*.



FINANCIALS



REVENUE

Plant Chicago continues to progress with the support of local and national foundations, government grants, corporate sponsors, and individual donors. Earned income comes from program fees such as workshops.

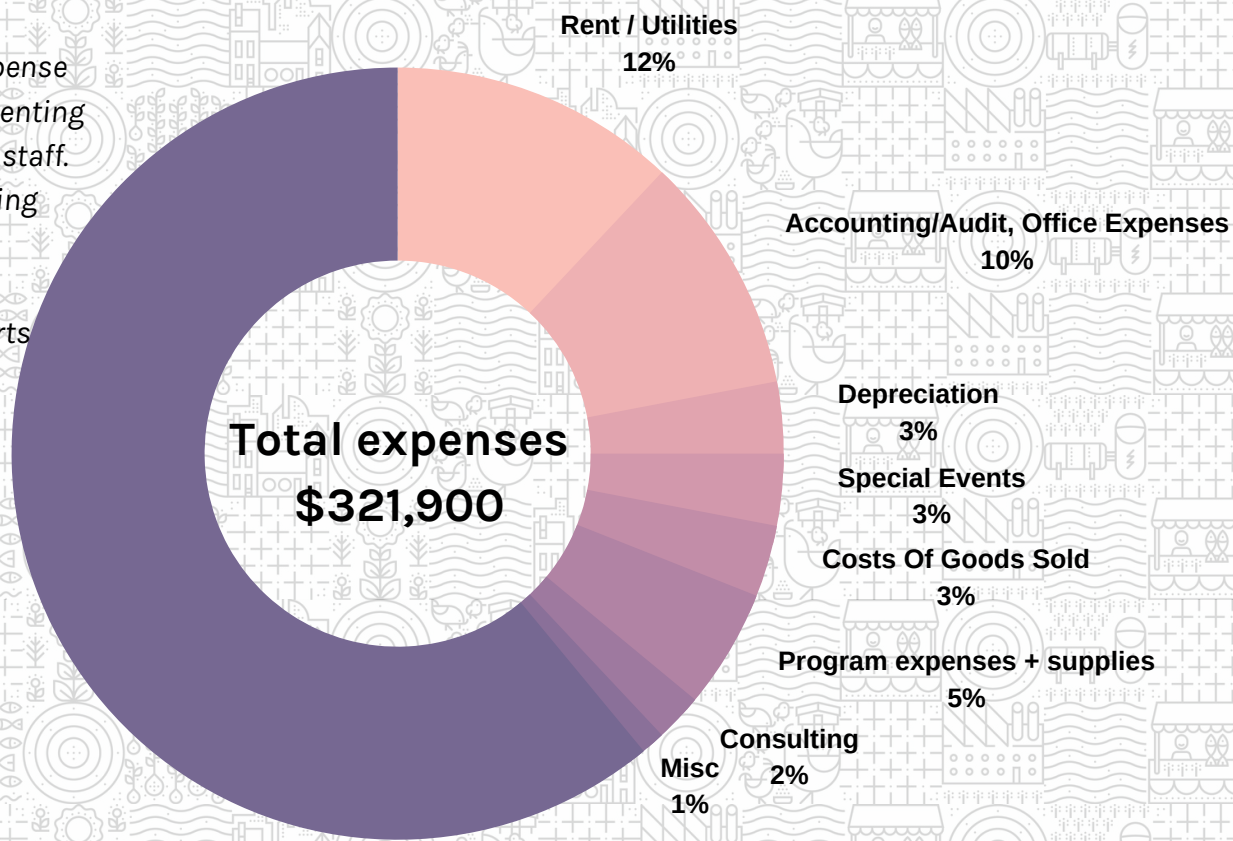
Your support is appreciated and we look forward to growing our impact with your help in 2019 and beyond.

Revenue and expenses based on audited unrestricted figures.

EXPENSES

Personnel is the largest expense for the organization, representing the long term tenure of the staff. Plant Chicago is a rent-paying tenant of The Plant.

\$0.78 of every dollar supports direct program costs.



THANKS TO OUR 2018 SPONSORS, FUNDERS + SMALL BUSINESSES

The list below are those foundations and businesses that have supported Plant Chicago through grants, sponsorships, in-kind services, or product donations for events.

FOUNDATIONS + GOVERNMENT

Albert Pick Foundation
Illinois Charitable Trust
Enkel Foundation
Leo S. Guthman Fund
Lumpkin Family Foundation
Robert and Toni Bader Foundation
Walter S. Mander Foundation
USDA



WALTER S. MANDER
FOUNDATION



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Conagra Brands Foundation
Convergence Energy
Fluence Bioengineering
Moonrise
Patagonia
Sparrow Realty
West Monroe Partners



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PRODUCT SPONSORS

Apologue Liqueurs, Arize Kombucha, Big Delicious Planet, Bike a Bee, Bubbly Dynamics, Closed Loop Farms, Four Letter Word, Just Ice, Kombuchade, Mycofloral Farms, Sacred Serve, Tablescapes, Whiner Beer.

Chefs Abra Berens, Paul Virant, and Eric Mansavage.

Anonymous
Rohit Agarwal
Nasreen and Khalid Ahmed
Rosa Alagara
Kaija Alers
Anneli Alers
Martha Anderson
Charles Bartels
Tricia Bautista
Raghuveera Betina
Mark Bettin
John Bilson
Twania Brewster
Lena Bryan
Stephanie Bugyis
Jaclyn Cannici
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Kathy Foreman
Paul Fricke
John Fudacz
Bradley Gadomski
Marites Galindo
David Garcia
Nory Garcia
William Garcia
Pat Gerby

Chris Gersch
Christopher Gladbach
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Andre Gordillo
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Steph Ho
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Michelle Johnson
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Jeffrey Kasnick
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Renu Lal
Nancy Landrum
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William Linker
Kat Lipson
Anna Livesay
Marietta Luayon
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Marlene Magdon
Charlie Mahoney
Irina Marinescu
Darren Mattinson
Patrick Mcging
Polly McGann
Keara Mckee
David McWery
Julie Mendoza
Morgan Moesta
Arch Moesta
Elizabeth Monkus
Jackie Wiese Montesdeoca
John Mulrow
Gabriel Nunez
Amy Padgett
Kathryn Pereira
Carolyn Pereira
Jonathan Pereira
Daniella Pereira
Tony Pham
Lupe Phillips
Jenya Polozova

THANKS TO ALL THE INDIVIDUALS WHO DONATED IN 2018!

Chrystal Price
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Eve Gibson Pytel
Maria Alejandra Ramirez
Joseph Ravens
Michael Richards
Manuel Sarroca
Matt Scheffer
Meghan Schultz
Rachel Schwartz
Phoebe Seltzer
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Xiang Zeng
Abe Zeverow
Matt Zwicky



**PLANT
CHICAGO**

