

CO-OP STARTUP SUPPORT

Purpose: To provide intensive guidance and support to individuals or groups interested in forming a cooperative through bootcamps, incubation, and study circles.

City's Role/Actions	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
<p>-Develop a grant program to support co-op development</p> <p>-Incorporate co-op resources into City programming (i.e., Commons on Champa)</p> <p>-Develop a grant program to offset startup costs (similar to the Organized Business Support Fund)</p> <p>-Create grant program to fund new organizations adding a cooperative startup program</p> <p>Partners: Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Business Development, DSBO, City Council, NEST</p>	Solidarity Circles				
	<p>-Lead 2 Solidarity Circles</p> <p>-Recruit 1 partner to lead a Solidarity Circle</p>	<p>-Provide opportunities for trainees to lead 2-3 Solidarity Circles</p> <p>-Lead 1-2 Solidarity Circles</p> <p>-Work with 1-2 partners to lead Solidarity Circles</p>	<p>-Provide opportunities for trainees to lead 2-4 Solidarity Circles</p> <p>-Work with partners to lead 2-3 Solidarity Circles</p> <p>-Support ongoing circles</p>	<p>-Provide opportunities for trainees to lead 2-4 Solidarity Circles</p> <p>-Work with partners to lead 2-3 Solidarity Circles</p> <p>-Support ongoing circles</p>	<p>-Provide opportunities for trainees to lead 2-4 Solidarity Circles</p> <p>-Work with partners to lead 2-3 Solidarity Circles</p> <p>-Support ongoing circles</p>

CO-OP CAPACITY BUILDING & GROWTH

Purpose: To strengthen existing cooperatives so they can continue to meet market needs and the needs of their members.

City's Role/Actions	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop a grant program to support capacity building opportunities -Promote bid evaluation metrics that include worker-centric employment practices -Identify requirements for co-ops to successfully win contracts -Identify ways to support co-ops through the certification process <p>Partners: DSBO, General Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Offer 1:1 Technical Assistance -Provide governance support -Provide business support to connect to new markets -Identify common areas of need -Identify potential partners in business TA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Offer 1:1 Technical Assistance -Continue to identify areas of need to support co-ops -Maximize economies of scale by exploring shared service opportunities (accounting services, HR, marketing, etc) -Train other business technical assistance organizations to provide TA to cooperatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Offer 1:1 Technical Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop and implement co-op back-office services -Maximize inter-cooperation to support cooperatives -Implement a Learning Cohort for established Co-ops in the growth stage 	

CO-OP CONVERSION SUPPORT

Purpose: To preserve local businesses and build community wealth by converting businesses to employee-owned when the owner is looking for an exit strategy.

City's Role/Actions	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide baby boomer business owners with info on business conversions -Develop a grant program to help offset the conversion cost -Promote bid evaluation metrics that include worker-centric employment practices -Create grant program to fund new organizations adding a cooperative conversion program -Engage Division of Workforce Services to share conversion information with industry partners <p>Partners: Business Development, Division of Workforce Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Research broad business landscape to assess potential for conversions -Support 2 conversions in Denver -Explore partnerships with local unions for conversions -Further explore conversion market to understand conversions with highest impact (lots of jobs) -Compile existing conversion vendors (valuators, CPAs, etc.) -Train additional vendors (CPAs, lawyers, etc.) on conversion process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify 1-2 Anchor Institution supply chain conversions -Support 1-2 high impact (>50 employees) conversions -Guide businesses through the conversion process -Connect businesses to conversion consultants (valuators, CPAs, etc.) -Connect businesses to funding sources to help with conversion costs -Gather conversion stories -Connect converted businesses to the network of cooperatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify 1-2 Anchor Institution supply chain conversions -Identify 3-4 high impact conversions -Guide businesses through the conversion process -Connect businesses to conversion consultants (valuators, CPAs, etc.) -Connect businesses to funding sources to help with conversion costs -Amplify conversion stories -Connect converted businesses to the network of cooperatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify 1-2 Anchor Institution supply chain conversions -Identify 3-4 high impact conversions -Guide businesses through the conversion process -Connect businesses to conversion consultants (valuators, CPAs, etc.) -Connect businesses to funding sources to help with conversion costs -Continue to gather and amplify conversion stories -Connect converted businesses to the network of cooperatives 	

ACCESS TO MARKETS

Purpose: To connect cooperatives to new markets (with an emphasis on Anchor Institutions) to increase revenue.

City's Role/Actions	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
<p>Co-convene anchors with CCWB to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Champion co-ops as a viable and preferable vendor option -Promote procurement policy shifts -Promote bid evaluation metrics that include worker-centric employment practices -Identify service contracts that could be switched to a worker co-op <p>Co-convene Quarterly Meetings</p>	<p>-Co-convene Quarterly Meetings to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Champion co-ops as a viable and preferable vendor option -Promote procurement policy shifts -Promote bid evaluation metrics that include worker-centric employment practices -Identify service contracts that could be switched to a worker co-op -Identify relevant Group Purchasing Organizations (GPOs) for potential engagement -Examine Anchor supply chains for conversion potential 	<p>-Co-host quarterly convenings to identify emerging opportunities and to monitor anchor progress and challenges with policy shifts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create & implement strategy for engaging GPOs -Gather Anchor business requirements for potential startups 			<p>-Co-host quarterly convenings to identify emerging opportunities and to monitor Anchor progress and challenges with policy shifts</p>

ACCESS TO CAPITAL

Purpose: To create opportunities for cooperatives to access affordable capital so they can maximize emerging opportunities.

City's Role/Actions	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inventory possible alternative financing structures for co-ops, including loan guarantees, special districts and real estate acquisition tools. -Promote the City's CDBG revolving loan fund with cooperatives -Ensure City's new SB investment revolving loan fund is co-op friendly. -Co-convene quarterly meetings of potential funders to learn about cooperative model and underwriting for cooperatives -Create a grant fund to help cover startup/conversion costs for co-ops -Evaluate the guarantee program and adjust as necessary -Work with partner organization to evaluate co-ops' access to the city's revolving loan fund and adjust as necessary -Help attract State and Federal funds available for co-ops, to Denver area CDFIs and other co-op lenders -Champion creation of a municipal or state bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create a capital navigation map for cooperatives -Co-convene potential funders to learn about cooperative model and underwriting for cooperatives (quarterly meetings) -Co-convene Anchors to present opportunities for investing in co-ops -Identify and cultivate champions and leverage points within local financial institutions -Track progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Co-convene potential funders of cooperatives to learn about cooperative model and underwriting for cooperatives (quarterly meetings) - Work with the City to identify barriers for co-ops -Track progress -Create report outlining how much funding went to co-ops each year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create revolving loan fund of capital from other cooperatives -Work with financial institutions so they are willing and ready to lend to cooperatives -Track learned experiences -Track progress - create report outlining how much funding went to co-ops each year -Evaluate success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Evaluate co-ops' access to the city's revolving loan fund and adjust as necessary -Track learned experiences -Track progress - create report outlining how much funding went to co-ops each year -Evaluate success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Expand revolving loan fund -Track learned experiences -Track progress - create report outlining how much funding went to co-ops each year -Evaluate success

INTER-COOPERATION

Purpose: To build a strong network of support for cooperatives.

City's Role/Actions	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
<p>-Maximize City communication platforms to increase reach.</p>	<p>-Convene cooperative networking events to build community and discuss prospects for cooperation among cooperatives</p> <p>-Education around the benefits of "secondary co-ops" (co-ops of co-ops)</p> <p>-Identify areas where cost could be shared and reduced</p> <p>-Discuss the need for a cooperative capital fund</p> <p>-Support the development of regional and national supply chains between cooperatives</p>		<p>-Convene 3+ year old co-ops to identify shared goals</p> <p>-Create 1 cooperative to support needs of existing cooperatives and reduce cost (i.e., Bookkeeping cooperative)</p>	<p>-Begin formation of a more formal network or federation which exists to support existing and new cooperatives</p>	<p>-Formal network or federation has formed and is operating without the support of CCWB or other cooperative development non-profits</p> <p>-Explore national and international trade networks between cooperatives</p>

Implementation Plan Details

Education

Educating Denver residents on the importance and benefits of cooperatives is essential to creating demand for the cooperative model. The majority of Denver workers, entrepreneurs, and established business owners are not aware that worker ownership is an option. Therefore, the first step is introducing Denver residents to the cooperative model, with the intention of: a) sparking the desire to form a cooperative with other members of the community; or b) sparking the desire to convert an existing business into a worker cooperative; or c) working for, doing business with or shopping at cooperatives. To this end, activities include:

- Facilitating Co-op 101 sessions, which are 90-minute sessions that explore the basics of cooperatives, how they function, and their benefits.
- Facilitating Co-op 201 sessions, which are 90-minute sessions that explore the detailed steps required to start a cooperative
- Facilitating Co-op 301 sessions, which are 90 to 120-minute sessions that explore specific topics and issues important to cooperative development like accounting or conflict resolution
- Facilitating community, labor, & place-based group presentations to engage groups already active in the community and orient them on how cooperatives can be used as a tool to achieve their existing goals
- Convening community book clubs and learning groups to engage individuals especially interested in a particular topic related to cooperatives
- Developing asynchronous educational materials which can include digital courses and multilingual online materials that expand capacity for the movement to be used by startup cooperative groups and other organizations beginning a cooperative development process
- Coordinating panel discussions with other cooperatives and cooperative leaders to provide community members an opportunity to learn about existing cooperatives and discuss broader social movements that have improved peoples' lives.
- Facilitating industry-specific cooperative education and development opportunities for workers to increase their awareness of the alternative possibilities of worker-ownership in their industry.

The following actions are also crucial as part of the education efforts:

- Passing a City Council ordinance
 - By defining cooperatives in Denver and recognizing their benefits, this ordinance will bring the cooperative model to the forefront of public consciousness, as well as specify what qualifies as a worker cooperative.
- Maximizing City communication platforms
 - Tools to increase awareness of cooperatives and legitimize the cooperative model as something worthy of wide consideration

- Building educational relationships (community colleges, trade schools, and universities) to incorporate cooperative education in K-12, vocational and extracurricular programming, trade schools, colleges, and universities.

Marketing and Awareness

Marketing is an essential tool to create awareness of the cooperative model, as well as opportunities within cooperatives such as jobs, special offers, and collaborations. The goal with marketing is not only to incentivize individuals to become educated on the cooperative model or to join a cooperative, but also to create demand for the goods and services of cooperatives. To achieve this, CCWB recommends the following activities:

- Marketing to targeted business owners about conversions
 - The majority of Baby Boomer and Gen X business owners do not currently have a succession plan for their business. Now is the most opportune time to promote sales to employees as a succession plan that will not only benefit the workers, but the city by keeping quality jobs local. The city can leverage its social capital by partnering to promote this exit strategy to business owners who are identified as prime targets for employee ownership.
- Include worker cooperatives in the local BIPOC database/directory (currently under-construction) to ensure that potential customers who are choosing to align their purchasing with their values, have an easy time connecting with co-ops for needed goods and services.
 - The desire to support local Black-, Indigenous-, and People of Color-Owned Business already exists. Moreover, as our marketing campaign moves forward, the desire to support local worker-owned cooperatives will grow. Still, without a central location to find these businesses many consumers, both at an individual and business level, will struggle to know which business they should support. Therefore, creating a database of POC and worker-owned businesses will be an essential step to expanding the reach of these businesses.
- Using “I Am Denver” storytelling campaign to tell stories of cooperatives.
 - This is a great opportunity to begin incorporating cooperative practices into the collective Denver identity.
- Embedding cooperative stories into City communications
 - Beyond the “I Am Denver” campaign, it is crucial that the City incorporate cooperative storytelling into their other communications strategies to expand the reach of the cooperative model without creating new programs or campaigns.
- Marketing Denver as a national hub for cooperatives or best place to start a cooperative
 - In the near future, Denver should begin marketing itself both in Colorado

and nationally as the best place in the country to start a cooperative. Currently, Colorado laws make it one of the easiest places to incorporate a cooperative in the United States. Therefore, as trends continue and the number of cooperatives grow, this will become an increasingly true statement.

Cooperative Developer Cultivation

Presently, one of the key limiting factors in the growth of the cooperative movement in Denver is the lack of knowledgeable and experienced cooperative developers and conversion specialists. As the demand for cooperative startups and conversions grows, this problem will only be exacerbated. To address these issues, CCWB is working to create programs for developers to be trained and have opportunities to engage with real startup or conversion projects to gain experience. To cultivate more cooperative developers, CCWB recommends the following activities:

- Planning and implementing a Spanish & English language Train the Trainer Series
 - In the “Train the Trainer” series, cooperative developers are taught the essentials of cooperative startup.
- Developing an apprenticeship program for Train the Trainer graduates
 - Trainers are given an opportunity to support any cooperatives being incubated as apprentices. The City should support these programs by providing funding for the trainees/apprentices to be paid for their time.
- Implementing a Cooperative Conversion Specialist Training to increase the capacity to convert businesses to employee owned
- Training SBDCs and other business support organizations on the cooperative business model and increase the SBDC’s business support offered to cooperatives
- Providing scholarships for national training opportunities (CooperationWorks!, Democracy At Work Institute (DAWI), RoundSky Solutions, etc.) to expand knowledge of the cooperative developers and conversion specialists and to facilitate connections with the national cooperative movement
- Creating additional funding opportunities for organizations to hire qualified cooperative developers. After the completion of the training, it is essential that cooperative developers and conversion specialists have opportunities to work professionally as cooperative developers or conversion specialists. For conversion specialists, this will not need very much subsidization, as conversions work with existing business with revenue streams, and therefore the ability to pay for conversion services. Meanwhile, cooperative startups, particularly those coming out of marginalized communities, often lack the resources to support the work of the cooperative developers.

Cooperative Startup Support

Cooperative startup support is perhaps the most labor intensive, yet crucial, component of the process towards increasing the number of worker cooperatives in the City and

County of Denver. Cooperative Startup Support is broken into three distinctive programs: Incubators, Bootcamps, and Solidarity Circles. Each program will grow in scale throughout the years as the demand for cooperatives, along with the capacity for cooperative development, increases. To support cooperative startups, CCWB recommends the following activities:

- Incubation
 - The incubation process is a 4-6 month “high touch” business formation process designed for groups with little to no knowledge of worker cooperatives or running a business. Generally, this process will be used when starting a cooperative to fulfill a contract opportunity identified by an Anchor Institution. In the end, the incubator will facilitate the formation and launch of the worker cooperative.
- Bootcamp
 - The bootcamp is a 2-3 month “low touch” business formation process designed for groups with prior business experience or knowledge. The bootcamps will work with groups who already have a solid idea for their respective cooperative and good cohesion within their group. The bootcamp will help these groups prepare for launch.
 - CCWB will share the curriculum with the intent that other organizations will also incorporate cooperative support into their own bootcamp offerings. CCWB will serve as a coach for partner organizations and help create new educational materials when needed.
- Solidarity Circles
 - Solidarity circles are a 3-5 month reading group and are meant for a collective of socially-minded entrepreneurs who are interested in starting some type of social enterprise, whether that be cooperative or otherwise. The solidarity circles go through a curriculum which helps them to formulate a cohesive group goal and business plan. The solidarity circles are our “medium-touch” process and the outcome of the group, unlike the previous startup processes, is a viable business plan, not the launch of a business.
- Developing a grant program to offset startup costs
 - Beyond the cost of the programs, startups incur other costs not covered under the startup program budgets, like legal fees. Therefore, a grant program should be created to help startups who need it pay for other support services. In Madison, grants of up to \$10,000 were given to groups to help offset startup costs.
- Creating a grant program to fund new organizations adding a cooperative startup program
 - Expanding startup support beyond just CCWB programs is crucial to

expanding capacity and broadening reach of the cooperative development programs. Grants must be created in order to encourage and support other organizations to create cooperative development programs. In Madison, grants of up to \$30,000 were given to organizations to support the starting of a cooperative development program.

- Incorporating cooperative resources into City programming
 - Various City agencies already engage in supporting startup small businesses. Cooperative resources and models should be incorporated into the existing program. Moreover, the City needs to include the concept of the cooperative business model in its materials and offerings.

Cooperative Capacity Building & Growth

After startup support ends, a cooperative business still has a variety of needs and obstacles to overcome. In fact, cooperative developers from other cities have noted that the first year after the cooperative opens is often the most crucial time for support services. Therefore, it is a high priority for support to continue for cooperatives until it is no longer needed. It is important to note, however, that this support is done with the aim of creating long term self-sufficiency, not dependency. To achieve this, CCWB recommends the following activities:

- Offering 1:1 Technical Assistance (TA)
 - Most of the support provided for existing cooperatives can be done through 1:1 TA sessions. TA services include, but are not limited to, support on governance, decision making, growth strategy, accounting, financial planning, marketing, membership, conflict resolution, etc.
- Providing business support to connect to new markets
 - CCWB can leverage its work with Anchor Institutions (see section on Connection to Markets) and its marketing expertise to help cooperatives connect to new markets.
- Identifying common areas of need
 - Continue to compile information with cooperatives that we work with on common challenges and needs of cooperatives and ensure that TA programs are effective in addressing these issues.
- Identifying potential partners and train partners in cooperative TA
 - Expand the number of partner organizations that provide TA to expand the capacity of the cooperative movement. Many organizations already offer TA for small businesses, CCWB encourages these organizations to expand their services to include TA for cooperatives
- Developing a grant program to support capacity building opportunities
 - For cooperatives that may be struggling, TA may be essential, but

unaffordable. Therefore, the City should explore creating grant opportunities for existing cooperatives to pay for the TA that they need.

- Evaluating City's RFP process to identify and address any barriers that exist for cooperatives to be awarded City contracts
- Creating a cooperative certification program
 - This will allow the City to provide discounts to cooperatives in the procurement process
 - In the meantime, ensure that the current MWBE certification process is available to cooperatives whose membership is majority women and/or People of Color
 - Ensure that business support providers know how to support cooperatives in gaining the appropriate certifications
- Maximizing economies of scale by exploring shared service opportunities (accounting services, human resources, marketing, etc.)
 - Back-office costs and responsibilities can have a significant impact on the long term success of cooperatives. Sharing these costs and responsibilities with other cooperatives is an excellent way to reduce costs in both money and time. A common way to address this is by forming shared-service cooperatives for things like accounting, human resources, marketing, bulk purchasing, etc.
- Promoting bid evaluation metrics that include worker-centric employment practices
 - Metrics that reflect the City's commitment to increased prosperity for all include components like employers that pay a living wage; provide benefits and paid family leave; offer opportunities for worker advancement; share profits with workers; have a smaller gap between salaries/wages of entry positions and executive positions; have low turnover rates. Worker cooperatives will score well on these metrics and may encourage more traditional employers to consider changes to their policies and practices
 - Engage General Services & Denver Small Business Opportunity Office to incorporate these metrics into the City's bid evaluation process.
- Maximizing inter-cooperation to support cooperatives
 - Inter-cooperation is another way to reduce costs (see section on Inter-Cooperation)
- Implementing a Learning Cohort for established cooperatives in the growth stage to identify common challenges they face. To reduce the cost of TA, learning cohorts can be created to address the most common issues facing cooperatives at any given time. It will also serve as a great place for cooperatives to build

connections and learn from each other as well as from TA providers.

Cooperative Conversion

Cooperative conversion is perhaps the quickest way to increase the number of cooperatives in the region, though it must be noted that conversions do not create a high number of new jobs. Instead, conversions help to preserve existing jobs that are threatened by business closure or outsourcing. With the impending wave of retiring Baby Boomer and Gen X business owners, the majority of which do not have succession plans, conversions should be considered a high priority for the City. The plan for the development of Conversion Support is as follows:

- Researching the broad business landscape to assess potential for conversions to gain a better understanding of the conversion landscape. Which business owners are coming into retirement age and do not have a succession plan? Which business owners are the most supportive of selling to their employees? What are the industries that employ the most low-wage workers? What are the industries that employ the most POC workers? These questions will be essential to understanding where to focus our energy and resources.
- Identifying conversions in Denver, prioritizing conversions with impact (high number of jobs at risk)
- Identifying supply chain conversions
 - Working with local Anchor Institutions, conversion specialists should identify conversion opportunities that exist within Anchor Institutions' supply chains.
- Exploring partnerships with local unions for conversions
 - Unionized workforces are a prime target for conversions, as the workers already have a basic understanding of working as a collective to meet collective goals.
- Connecting businesses to conversion consultants such as cooperative developers, accountants, valuers, and contract lawyers
 - A common barrier to conversions is a lack of knowledge about the option to convert and lack of access to experienced conversion consultants. We recommend the City explore new ways of connecting businesses to conversion specialists. For example, New York City municipal website owner2owners.nyc serves as a portal for any business inquiring about business conversion.
- Guiding businesses through the conversion process
 - Just as with cooperative startups, cooperative conversion may need additional support after the conversion process ends.
- Working with partner organizations to send out communication (letters) to share the idea of business conversion

- Working with conversion specialists, the City should create a communication to business owners of retirement age to explain the idea of sale to employees as a conversion strategy.
- Developing a grant program to help offset the conversion cost
 - Conversion costs may present a barrier to businesses converting to employee ownership. Moreover, a conversion grant program may provide a needed incentive for owners and employees alike to consider sale to employees as an exit strategy. The State of Colorado already offers grants for conversions. The City should consider expanding on this and offering supplemental grants for employee-ownership conversions.
- Promoting bid evaluation metrics that include worker-centric employment practices
 - Metrics that reflect the City's commitment to increased prosperity for all include things like employers that pay a living wage; provide benefits and paid family leave; offer opportunities for worker advancement; share profits with workers; have a smaller gap between salaries/wages of entry positions and executive positions; have low turnover rates. Businesses that convert to worker-owned will most likely score better on these metrics than they did prior to conversion. If the City incorporates worker-centric metrics in its bid evaluation process, these advantages should be communicated to converting businesses that want to compete on City contracts.
 - Engage General Services & Denver Small Business Opportunity Office to incorporate these metrics into the City's process.
- Expanding grant funding and capacity building to increase the number of cooperative conversion specialists within the City & County of Denver.
 - Currently, fewer than five individuals can support employee ownership conversion services in Colorado. By increasing grant funding and capacity building to hire and train additional conversion specialists, more legacy Denver businesses will be able to understand worker ownership as a succession planning option and will have support to help guide them through the process.
- Engaging the Division of Workforce Services to share conversion information with industry partners
 - Workforce programs already have deep connections with business owners. The Division of Workforce Services at the City of Denver can leverage its social capital to promote conversion as a viable succession plan to these owners.
- Gathering and amplifying conversion stories
- A major barrier to owners considering sale to employees as an exit strategy is their lack of familiarity with the concept. By gathering and amplifying stories from other conversions, we can show owners that not only does selling to employees work,

but it has many benefits and is a common and encouraged practice in the City of Denver.

- Connecting converted businesses to the network of cooperatives
 - It is crucial that worker-owners who have bought their businesses from the previous owners feel a sense of connection to the broader worker cooperative community. Therefore, it is important to create connections between conversion and startup cooperatives so that they can share experience, knowledge, struggles, and potentially even costs.

Access to Markets

Growing the market and increasing access to existing markets for new worker cooperatives will be essential for them to succeed in Denver. While there are many ways to do this, the emphasis in this section will be on connecting cooperatives to Anchor Institutions. The activities that can increase connection to markets include:

- Co-convening quarterly meetings with Anchors
 - These quarterly meetings provide a space for Anchors to not only become educated on the ways they can leverage their economic power to support cooperatives and the community, but also a space for Anchors to share the work they are doing and encourage others to act.
 - It is crucial that the City leverage its social capital to create more buy-in from local Anchors.
 - These quarterly meetings will pave the way to:
 - Champion cooperatives as a viable and preferable vendor option
 - Promote procurement policy shifts
 - Promote bid evaluation metrics that include worker-centric employment practices
 - Identify service contracts that could be switched to a worker cooperative
- Creating & implementing strategy for engaging Group Purchasing Organizations (GPO)
 - If Anchors collectively pressure their GPOs to prioritize local purchasing and purchasing from cooperatives, the GPOs are likely to make it a priority. Engaging GPOs, as well as Anchor's preferred vendors is a strategy that some Anchors are already implementing, making it worthwhile to explore this as a strategy for prioritizing worker cooperatives as a supplier of goods and services – if this is a relationship that a worker cooperative has an interest in.
- Gathering anchor business requirements for potential startups
 - Creating startups which serve an existing Anchor need is an excellent way to de-risk the cooperative startup process. Working with Anchor partners

to identify potential startups which can fulfill an existing Anchor need can help increase the success of cooperatives.

- Examining anchor supply chains for conversion potential
 - Conversions in Anchor supply chains is a strategy already being utilized by groups like the Evergreen Cooperatives in Cleveland and the Obran Cooperative in Baltimore. To read more on this topic see the section above on Conversions.

Access to Capital

Access to Capital is one of the biggest barriers to the cooperative movement nationwide. Due to the structure of cooperatives, they are often unable to provide a personal guarantee for a loan. Moreover, most financial institutions are unfamiliar with the cooperative structure. These two factors, among others, make financial institutions uncomfortable with lending to worker cooperatives. However, there are many examples of municipalities and financial institutions that have experience and success with lending to cooperatives. In order to bridge this gap in funding the following steps must be taken:

- Co-convening potential funders to learn about cooperative model and underwriting for cooperatives (quarterly meetings)
 - Similar to the quarterly meeting of Anchors, these meetings would serve as a space to not only learn about the cooperative model and underwriting practices for cooperatives, but as a space for financial institutions to share their experiences with cooperatives and encourage other financial institutions to consider lending to cooperatives.
 - The City would play a crucial role in leveraging its social capital to bring funders together.
- Co-convening anchors to present opportunities for investing in cooperatives
 - As part of the quarterly convenings of Anchor Institutions, discussions should be had around how Anchors can use their often large endowments to invest into local small businesses and cooperatives.
- Identifying and cultivating champions and leverage points within local financial institutions
 - Oftentimes, as we have learned with our work with Anchors, it takes a champion within an organization to push forward progress on a given initiative. Otherwise, initiatives tend to get lost in the bureaucracy of large institutions. Therefore, we will work to identify leverage points and champions within financial institutions who will bottom line the work needed to change lending practices towards cooperatives.
- Creating a capital navigation map for cooperatives
 - For many cooperative owners who are unfamiliar with the business landscape, seeking sources of capital can be a daunting challenge. By

creating a capital map for cooperatives we hope to reduce barriers to finding sources of capital for varying needs.

- Identifying ways for the City's CDBG revolving loan fund to support cooperatives (i.e. revising underwriting policies)
 - The City should work to identify ways to reduce barriers to cooperatives accessing existing or new revolving loan funds for small businesses. With a particular focus on gap funding and funding with a high potential for job creation.
- Working with the City to identify barriers for cooperatives
 - The City can work with partner organizations to continuously evaluate existing barriers cooperative face when attempting to find sources of capital
- Creating loan guarantee program to secure loans for cooperatives
 - The City should consider acting as a guarantor for loans where a guarantor is needed to expand cooperatives' access to capital sources.
- Attracting state and federal funding for cooperatives to Denver area CDFIs and other cooperative lenders to increase the availability of state and federal dollars earmarked for cooperatives and greatly expand cooperatives' access to capital.
- Creating a revolving loan fund of capital from other cooperatives
 - In conjunction with Inter-Cooperation efforts, (see next section) it will be critical to facilitate the creation of a revolving loan fund made by and for cooperatives. Cooperatives funding each other is what has led to the high density of cooperatives in regions like Emilia-Romagna in Italy and the Basque region in Spain.

Inter-Cooperation

Inter-cooperation amongst cooperatives is essential to the long-term health and success of the cooperative movement. Anywhere in the world where there is a high number of cooperatives, there is a high level of inter-cooperation amongst cooperatives. Alone cooperatives are worker-owned businesses, however when working together, cooperatives can transform regional economies and push back against some of the core contradictions of capitalism as discussed in Part II. To build inter-cooperation, CCWB proposes the following activities:

- Convening cooperative networking events to build community, promote peer learning, and discuss prospects for cooperation among cooperatives
 - These convenings will serve as a site for learning about concepts relevant to cooperatives, discussing and sharing experiences, and building connections. With a focus on informal ways of supporting one another in the short term, and formal ways for supporting one another in the long term.
- Showcasing the benefits of “secondary cooperatives”

- “Secondary cooperatives,” “cooperatives of cooperatives,” or best known as business cooperatives are cooperatives formed amongst cooperatives to reduce cost through bulk purchasing or sharing of expenses. For example, Namaste Solar cooperative helped to form Amicus Solar cooperative, which is a cooperative of small solar companies (both cooperatively and traditionally owned) which collectively purchase solar panels and other materials to reduce cost and be more competitive with larger solar companies. The success of the cooperative sparked them to launch another cooperative Amicus O&M, which allows the companies to share the cost of operations and management.
- If appropriate, developing a “secondary” cooperative to support needs of existing cooperatives, thereby reducing costs and reaching economies of scale
- Discussing the need for a cooperative capital fund
- Supporting the development of regional and national supply chains between cooperatives
- Convening 3+ year old cooperatives to identify shared goals.
- Forming a formal network or federation which exists to support existing and new cooperatives. After establishing an informal network of cooperatives, explore the creation of a formal network or federation of cooperatives in Denver.
- Exploring national and international trade networks between cooperatives

Evaluation and Impact Reporting

When surveying the work done in other cities, one of the most interesting findings was the lack of formal impact reporting and evaluation. Impact reporting is crucial to effectively communicate the successes and failures of any initiatives taking place. Furthermore, evaluation plays a key role in ensuring that programs are having the intended outcomes and that the work is effective in achieving its goals. Evaluation and reporting should be integrated into each of the 9 focus areas outlined above to ensure that goals are being met and resources are being utilized in an effective manner. Moreover, if broader support is to be achieved, proof will be needed of the efficacy of the cooperative movement. It is critical that the resources are available to ensure proper documentation, evaluation, and reporting of the cooperative development process throughout all focus areas.

Policy Advocacy

It is also critical to continue to work with policymakers to advocate for the following policies:

- Bid discounts for worker cooperatives and businesses with cooperative practices on City contracts as outlined in the Policy
- Temporary exceptions or priority status during permitting and licensing process

- Create an Opportunity to Purchase law which gives workers the right to purchase a business if the business is going to be sold or closed down
- Explore legislation to support commercial land trusts to preserve affordability of commercial spaces
- Consider additional policy leverage points as they become relevant

Appendix IV. The Seven Cooperative Principles

Cooperatives around the world generally operate according to the same core principles and values, adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance in 1995.¹

1. VOLUNTARY & OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Anyone can join a cooperative—they do not discriminate based on gender, social, racial, political or religious factors.

2. DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

Members control their business by deciding how it is run and who leads it.

3. MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

All cooperative members invest in their cooperative. This means people, not shareholders, benefit from a cooperative's profits.

4. AUTONOMY & INDEPENDENCE

When making business deals or raising money, cooperatives never compromise their autonomy or democratic member control.

5. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Cooperatives provide education, training and information so their members can contribute effectively to the success of their cooperative.

6. COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

Cooperatives believe working together is the best strategy to empower their members and build a stronger cooperative economy.

7. CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

Cooperatives are community-minded. They contribute to the sustainable development of their communities by sourcing and investing locally.

¹ “The 7 Cooperative Principles.” All of this section is borrowed from the NCBA CLUSA website. These principles are foundational to the cooperative movement around the world and can be found on many other websites on the internet.

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