

Creating a Robust Worker Cooperative Sector in Denver

Building on Local & National Best Practices



Center for

Community Wealth Building

An Inclusive Economy That Works for All

The **Center for Community Wealth Building** works to transform the current economic development system to a more inclusive and equitable model. Its key strategies for accomplishing this goal include democratizing business ownership through employee ownership, strengthening local People of Color (POC) entrepreneurship opportunities, and working with place-based institutions such as hospitals, universities, and municipalities to help them shift their procurement, investment, and hiring policies to support their local economy. CCWB's vision is a people-owned, inclusive, and sustainable metro Denver economy that catalyzes prosperous and resilient communities free from racism and injustice. It promotes inclusive economic opportunities to normalize a new economic development model that focuses on including and elevating the voices of impacted and vulnerable communities, and leveraging anchor institutions' economic engines as drivers of the economy.

Authors:

Sidney Farber, AmeriCorps VISTA, Cooperative Development Associate

C. Paul Bindel, Cooperative Development Director

Michelle Sturm, Anchor Strategy Director

Yessica Holguin, Executive Director

Acknowledgements:

The authors would like to thank the following people for sharing their insight and experience and helping to shape the recommendations in this brief.

Yassi Eskandari, Sustainable Economies Law Center, Berkeley and Oakland, CA

Saduf Syal, New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives, New York City, NY

Charity Schmidt, Madison Cooperative Development Coalition, Madison, WI

Daniel Bonilla, Business Technical Assistance Program, Minneapolis, MN

Tracey Nichols, Former Director of Economic Development for City of Cleveland, Cleveland, OH

Emily Patrick, Office of Economic Development, Boston, MA



Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Executive Summary | 4 |
| About This Report | 8 |
| Key Terms | 9 |
| Part I. Problem Statement | 10 |
| Part II. Cooperatives: a Vital Solution | 10 |
| Part III. Recommendations to Create a Supportive Worker Cooperative Ecosystem | 13 |
| A. Support Existing Cooperative Development Programs | 13 |
| B. Train more Cooperative Advocates and Technical Assistance Providers | 14 |
| C. Help Worker Cooperatives Connect with Capital & Grant Funding | 15 |
| D. Support Real Estate Acquisition Strategies that Reduce Displacement | 17 |
| E. Encourage Sale to Workers as an Avenue for Business Ownership Succession | 18 |
| F. Create Procurement Bid Incentives for Worker Cooperatives | 19 |
| G. Engage Anchor Institutions as Partners | 20 |
| H. Produce Annual Reports on the State of Cooperatives | 22 |
| I. Give Worker Cooperatives Priority During Licensing and Permitting Processes | 22 |
| J. Facilitate the Creation of a Cooperative Development Coalition | 22 |
| K. Incentivize Employees to Purchase Businesses Being Sold by Owners | 23 |
| L. Integrate Cooperatives into Denver's Workforce Services | 24 |
| Part IV. Additional Initiatives | 25 |
| M. Integrate Cooperative Development Curriculum into Education Systems | 25 |
| N. Create a Hub of Democratized Development | 25 |
| O. Charter a Municipal Bank | 26 |
| Appendix I. Learning From Other Cities | 27 |
| Berkeley | 27 |
| New York City | 29 |
| Madison | 31 |
| Minneapolis | 33 |
| Oakland | 35 |
| Cleveland | 35 |
| Boston | 37 |
| Appendix II. Cities At-A-Glance | 38 |
| Appendix III. The Path Forward | 39 |
| Appendix IV. The Seven Cooperative Principles | 64 |
| Works Cited | 65 |

Executive Summary

In a time of wealth inequality, when the most powerful are always those with the most money, **cooperative businesses** offer an impactful tool to distribute wealth and power. While all businesses can only succeed if they respond to human needs, cooperative businesses must exist for the explicit benefit of their members.

Whether worker-owned, business-owned, resident-owned, or community-owned, cooperatives center the needs of people that the mainstream economy too often overlooks or excludes. **Any municipal investment in the development of cooperative businesses is, first and foremost, an investment in the city's people.** A robust cooperative ecosystem leads to more jobs, better wages, and better working conditions for workers. It also distributes business ownership more inclusively throughout the City, by expanding who has access to hands-on entrepreneurial education, quality jobs, and profits.

For workers in a worker cooperative, shared ownership means shared profit, increased agency over their work life, and a significant decrease in the likelihood of their jobs being outsourced or cut during a recession. In fact, in areas with high density of worker cooperatives, layoffs were so rare during recessions that the unemployment rates decreased, while surrounding regions saw stark increases in unemployment levels during the same period. For cooperative businesses, mature worker cooperatives have a higher survival rate than traditional businesses, and startup cooperatives have a survival rate nearly twice that of traditional startups. This means that cooperative businesses are better able to serve their communities, provide stable jobs, and support a thriving economy in Denver. An investment in a cooperative business produces a longer and higher return than an investment in a traditional small business.

To build a robust cooperative ecosystem and grow the worker cooperative sector, Center for Community Wealth Building recommends that the City of Denver:

1. Incorporate a consistent yearly line item in the City's General Fund budget (at least \$500,000 a year for five years) specifically for cooperative development to ensure that General Funds can be allocated to:
 - a. Support the emergence of startup cooperatives and the conversion of existing businesses to employee ownership, especially in neighborhoods most vulnerable to involuntary displacement
 - b. Support the internal capacity and growth of established cooperatives
 - c. Recruit and train new cooperative developers (including SBDCs, and other partners)
2. Incorporate cooperatives into the City's existing economic development toolkit and resources available for small businesses.

This report provides more detailed information about these priority recommendations, as well as many other successful strategies that other municipalities have utilized to grow their cooperative sector and ecosystem. Cooperative leaders and city officials from the following cities were interviewed for this report: **Berkeley, New York City, Madison, Minneapolis, Oakland, Cleveland, and Boston**. They **shared their successes and lessons learned** and these provide a tested road map for how Denver can best proceed. Based on this research, CCWB formulated the recommendations below, which are necessary to create a thriving cooperative movement in Denver, particularly in neighborhoods most at risk of displacement.

Invest in Worker Cooperative Development, Allocating Funds from the City's Budget to:

1. Support Existing Cooperative Development Programs

Expanding the capacity of organizations already providing cooperative development services will grow the cooperative movement. Municipal investment ensures that low-income communities have access to technical assistance, incubation, and the support needed to launch successful cooperatives.

2. Train more Cooperative Advocates and Technical Assistance Providers

Expanding *who* has the training and know-how to develop cooperatives will accelerate the proliferation of worker cooperatives in Denver, while providing culturally relevant and linguistically diverse support.

3. Facilitate the Creation of a Cooperative Development Coalition

Fostering the cooperative ecosystem requires coordination. This coalition will collectively coordinate efforts, develop and implement strategies, and learn from the successes and failures of the cooperative movement, both in Denver and around the country.

4. Produce Annual Reports on the State of Cooperatives

Understanding the impact of the City's investment in cooperatives, as well as the shifting needs of worker cooperatives, upcoming opportunities, and potential hurdles will ensure that policies are effective and that future plans respond to evolving local contexts.

5. Create a Hub of Democratized Development

Having a central, community-owned hub would both preserve affordable commercial and retail space for the local community and also be an example of equitable development to inspire more people to create cooperatives.

Shift Internal Policies and Practices to:

1. Facilitate Worker Cooperatives' Access to Capital & Grant Funding

Taking intentional steps to ensure that cooperatives have access to capital is of critical importance. The City should evaluate its existing economic development tools for their ability to fund cooperatives and identify a targeted funding mechanism to support cooperatives' access to capital. This is particularly important for startup cooperatives or existing businesses converting to a cooperative.

2. Support Real Estate Acquisition Strategies that Reduce Displacement

Countering involuntary displacement requires a multi-prong approach. Worker cooperatives, layered with community-owned real estate, can become an even more powerful anti-displacement strategy. The City can utilize its real estate holdings to strategically hold properties and sell them to commercial-tenant-owned cooperatives or trusts once these groups have pooled enough capital for a down-payment.

3. Encourage Sale to Workers as an Avenue for Business Ownership Succession

Preserving local businesses is critical to ensure that Denver maintains the uniqueness of its neighborhoods. The City can promote Denver-based employee ownership by highlighting successful conversion stories, working with technical assistance partners to promote employee ownership as an option for business succession, and exploring incentives for ownership conversions, such as

allowing businesses to suspend sales tax remittances to offset the legal and accounting fees required to accomplish a conversion.

4. Create Procurement Bid Incentives for Worker Cooperatives

Recognizing that the certification system is complex, the City can affirm the economic value of worker-centered practices in the City's procurement regulations/policies. In the long term, the City can adopt a discount policy for worker cooperatives in its procurement process.

5. Give Worker Cooperatives Priority or Temporary Exemptions During Licensing and Permitting Processes

Permitting and licensing can be a difficult and lengthy process. Expediting this process for worker cooperatives will significantly decrease the barriers to developing many cooperatives, particularly those that are most capital intensive.

6. Integrate Cooperatives into Denver's Workforce Services

Investing in building the skills of entry level workers will help meet the employment needs of industries in Metro Denver. The City can include appropriate DEDO Workforce Services staff in cooperative training sessions and can maximize its reach by sharing employee ownership conversion information with employers.

Leverage the City's Social Capital to:

1. Engage Anchor Institutions as Partners

Work with Anchor Institutions to invest resources into local communities and businesses from some of the city's largest economic actors, like hospitals, universities, cultural institutions, the Convention Center, and even the City itself.

2. Help Worker Cooperatives Connect with Capital

Increasing access to capital is critical for cooperatives. The City can host training sessions for local banks, CDFIs, and credit unions to learn about underwriting practices from national lenders that support cooperatives, such as Shared Capital, the Working World, or LEAF Fund.

3. Integrate Cooperative Development Curriculum into Education Systems

Incorporating cooperative development programming at all levels of the education system – pre-K thru higher education – will serve to foster talent and innovation for the cooperative sector. The City can advocate for the creation of cooperative development curriculum and programs by leveraging its networks and by providing direct funding for implementation.

The bottom line is cooperatives have the potential to transform our economy and address the challenges created by our current economic system, including economic inequality, the conflict between the working and owning classes, consistent economic downturns, and global competition for lower wages, all without the need for radical political action. Denver has the opportunity to become a leader in cooperative development and realize an inclusive economy that benefits all of its residents.

Pass Ordinances to:

1. Incentivize Employees to Purchase Businesses Being Sold by Owners

Preserving high quality jobs requires a different approach to economic development. The City can pass an ordinance that encourages companies to give their employees the option to buy the company when an owner is looking for an exit strategy. This approach, coupled with access to capital, can preserve and grow high quality jobs in Denver.

2. Support Real Estate Acquisition Strategies that Reduce Displacement

Strengthening the local business environment and preventing further displacement requires stabilizing real estate. The City can pass a tenant opportunity to purchase act (TOPA) that would give commercial tenants a defined period of time to make an offer when their building goes on the market.

3. Create a Municipal Bank

A sustainable source of financing will help foster the cooperative ecosystem. Creating a municipal bank is an effective strategy for maximizing municipal assets and providing reliable financing for equitable and sustainable development.

About This Report

This report provides recommendations to support Denver Economic Development & Opportunity's Neighborhood Equity Stabilization Team's interest in fostering a thriving cooperative movement as an effective and long-term strategy for addressing systemic barriers workers face in accessing economic opportunity and creating the building blocks for an inclusive, sustainable economy.

- 👉 **Part I** describes the problems of gentrification, involuntary displacement, rising cost of living, and rising inequality in Denver. Since cooperatives provide paths for asset-building and are tools for community ownership, they directly combat the root causes of these key issues facing our community.
- 👉 **Part II** examines the impact of worker cooperatives on an individual, micro-economic, and macro-economic level.
- 👉 **Part III** lays out essential steps for the City and County to take to create a framework that promotes the growth and health of the worker cooperative movement. The three highest levers for action are: support existing cooperative development programs, train more cooperative technical assistance providers, and connect local worker cooperatives to sources of capital, including grant funding.
- 👉 **Part IV** describes additional, longer term steps Denver can take to support the burgeoning movement.
- 👉 **Appendix I** looks at the actions taken by Berkeley, New York City, Madison, Minneapolis, Oakland, Cleveland, and Boston to promote the worker cooperative movement.
- 👉 **Appendix II** is a Cities At a Glance chart that provides a summary overview of the cities studied.
- 👉 **Appendix III** lays out a multi-pronged implementation strategy for moving forward.
- 👉 **Appendix IV** shares The 7 Cooperative Principles that are practiced by cooperatives across the globe.

Note: Appendix I is a summary of CCWB's conversations with other municipalities and offers additional context for the recommendations in Parts III and IV.

Key Terms

Cooperative Development

A multi-month facilitated process whereby a group of people develop the skills necessary and coordinate complex tasks to launch a democratically managed enterprise. Key steps include registering an entity, deciding its financial, governance and membership models, researching feasibility, developing a business plan, building a high-trust working culture, drawing up legal agreements, and raising capital.

Employee Ownership Conversion

A business transaction involving the sale of all or part of an existing business to the workers of that business, either directly in the form of a cooperative or indirectly in the form of a trust held in the employee's benefit (Employee Stock Ownership Plan or Employee Ownership Trust).

Anchor Institutions

Anchor Institutions are large, place-based, nonprofit or public entities that are rooted in place (i.e. anchored in place) ... think hospitals, universities, museums, municipalities, and school systems. They have a mission to serve the public good through the services they provide. They have a large economic footprint due to their large workforces and through their purchasing of goods and services needed for their business operations.

Worker Cooperative

Any business that has elected to be a worker cooperative, or any LLC or other entity type that has: the majority of voting power held by workers; the majority of workers being owners; a board of directors (if there is one) democratically elected by the workers; and a majority of allocated earnings distributed on the basis of work done for the cooperative.

Shared Service Cooperative

Any democratically managed business entity that provides their members with shared marketing, shared purchasing, shared financing or other shared resources such as equipment or real estate.

Multi-stakeholder Cooperative

A democratically managed business entity that serves and balances the needs and talents of multiple types of members (i.e. workers, producers, consumers, investors, etc).

Part I. Problem Statement

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Metro Denver had one of the nation’s strongest urban economies. In 2019, the median household income in the Denver metro area was \$85,641, compared to the national median income of \$65,712. By most measures, Metro Denver was doing exceptionally well. Yet, these measures did not reflect the reality in our economically marginalized neighborhoods and communities that continue to face health inequities and risk of involuntary displacement. The growth of wealth in Denver has been highly unequal and racialized. While, in 2019, the average White household income was \$68,300, the average Black household income was \$35,300, the average Hispanic household income was \$40,200 and the average Native American household income was \$31,100.¹ Aggravating the struggles of lower income and non-White communities, Denver is second only to San Francisco in rates of gentrification and involuntary displacement.² While the business community and many politicians tout gentrification as an accomplishment, in reality it has left many Denver residents worse off than before, with their communities destroyed and legacy businesses shut down. However, growth and development do not have to be synonymous with gentrification, involuntary displacement, and inequality. It is possible to shift towards a new paradigm of equitable development— what is referred to as community wealth building. Many other cities are already doing it.

Part II. Cooperatives: a Vital Solution

For the purposes of this paper, worker cooperatives are defined as any business that has elected to be a worker cooperative, or any LLC or other entity type that has:

- A. the majority of voting power held by workers;
- B. the majority of workers being owners;
- C. a board of directors (if there is one) democratically elected by the workers;
- D. and a majority of allocated earnings distributed on the basis of work done for the cooperative.

It is important for the City to define “worker cooperatives” to clarify which businesses can access relevant services and support programs.

While this document focuses primarily on worker cooperatives, it is important to recognize that cooperative workers are not always W-2 employees. The growing gig economy has led many self-employed individuals to work as contractors for digital apps. Similarly, many individuals maintain self-employment to carry out consulting, coaching, counseling, childcare, home care, and other services. These contractors can organize with other individuals into **shared service cooperatives**, democratically managed business entities that provide their members with shared marketing, shared purchasing, shared financing, or other shared resources such as equipment or real estate. Alternatively, a

¹ “Household Income in Denver, Colorado.”

² Rubino, “Denver No. 2 for Gentrification in Recent Years, National Study Finds.”

worker cooperative may have additional stakeholders such as consumers, producers, or investors. A **multi-stakeholder cooperative** is a democratically managed business entity that serves multiple types of members. One example is a food delivery cooperative owned in part by its drivers and in part by restaurant businesses. For reference, the State of Colorado recognizes a business as employee owned if its workers hold at least 30% of its ownership stake.

Throughout the United States and across the world, municipalities, economic developers, community organizers and workers are increasingly turning to worker cooperatives as a tool for addressing growing inequalities in income, wealth, and health outcomes. Worker cooperatives address some of the core failings of our current economic system, like rapidly increasing inequality, extreme economic fluctuations, the rising cost of living, wage stagnation, and worsening quality of life.

Worker owned cooperatives have many benefits. First, **for workers, shared ownership means shared profit, increased agency over their work life, and a significant decrease in the likelihood of their jobs being outsourced.**

Second, **wage parity within firms is greatly increased.** A report from the National Cooperative Business Association found that “the vast majority of worker cooperatives have maintained a 2-to-1 pay ratio between highest- and lowest-paid workers, compared to a CEO-to-worker pay ratio of 303-to-1 at the average U.S. corporation.”³

Third, and more impressively, **mature worker cooperatives have a higher survival rate than traditional businesses.** Cooperatives 6-10 years old have a survival rate of 25.6% and those older than 26 years have a 14.7% survival rate, compared to 18.7% and 11.9% for traditional businesses, respectively.⁴ Meanwhile, a study of Canadian cooperatives showed that startup cooperatives had a survival rate that was nearly twice that of traditional startups.⁵

Lastly, on the individual level, being a cooperative owner means that workers can choose, and generally do, to **receive dividends as the business creates profit.** In 2019, the average U.S. worker-owner who received dividends took home \$8,241 in additional year-end income.⁶

On top of this quantifiable increase in income is the more intangible or qualitative **increases in individuals’ financial and business competency, social capital, and overall agency in society.** These skills and connections are invaluable for workers, as they not only help workers navigate our business centric economy, but moreover, this knowledge, once acquired, stays with workers for a lifetime.

3 Palmer, “2019 Worker Cooperative Economic Census.”

4 Palmer.

5 Schatz, “Five Critical Things Every Co-Operative Leader Should Know.”

6 Palmer, “2019 Worker Cooperative Economic Census.”

On the macroeconomic level, the effects of worker cooperatives existing in high density are startling. To gather this data, researchers often look towards the two regions of the world where cooperatives exist in a high enough density to have measurable macroeconomic effects: the Basque Region of Spain and the state of Emilia-Romagna in Italy. Findings from these regions showed unemployment levels are stabilized through recessions. The Basque Region in Spain, (the region where the Mondragon Corporation, the world's largest cooperative corporation is located) was one of the only regions in Spain to create employment during the 2008 financial crisis. "Between 2009 and 2010, for instance, registered unemployment dropped by 9.87% in the town where Mondragon is headquartered, while it rose by 13.5% in Bilbao. Thus, in the Basque Country in general, the unemployment rate is currently (in 2011) 8.8% compared to 20.8% in Spain overall."⁷

Similar results were seen in Emilia-Romagna in Italy. A recent study by Caselli, Costa, and Delbono found that in the period between 2010-2014, while the region's economy was stagnant and the rest of Italy was seeing negative GDP growth rates, cooperatives' revenue increased by 48%, and employment increased by over 17%, while profits fell by 21% because they chose to prioritize workers. Meanwhile, non-cooperative firms saw a 15% increase in revenue and a slight decrease in employment levels despite experiencing a six-fold increase in profit.⁸ In a nutshell, cooperatives prioritize employment and outcomes for their workers, while traditional firms prioritize profit. A 2016 study explored what occurred to create this effect and found that cooperatives generally utilize one of two strategies: either they (1) allow wages to fluctuate with the conditions of the market to avoid laying off workers during recessions, or (2) the firms reinvest profits into a wage stabilization fund that ensures consistent wages throughout a downturn, without layoffs.⁹ It is important to note that these countercyclical effects are not isolated to two regions or a couple of studies but have also been documented in some of Uruguay's Industries^{10 11} and in the Pacific Northwest's Plywood Industry.^{12 13}

Cooperatives have the potential to transform our economy and address the challenges created by our current economic system, including economic inequality, the conflict between the working and owning classes, consistent economic downturns, and global competition for lower wages, all without the need for radical political action.

7 Flecha and Cruz, "Cooperation for Economic Success."

8 Caselli, Costa, and Delbono, "What Do Cooperative Firms Maximize, If at All? Evidence from Emilia-Romagna in the Pre-Covid Decade."

9 Navarra, "Employment Stabilization Inside Firms: An Empirical Investigation of Worker Cooperatives."

10 Burdín and Dean, "New Evidence on Wages and Employment in Worker Cooperatives Compared with Capitalist Firms."

11 Burdín and Andrés Dean, "Revisiting the Objectives of Worker-Managed Firms: An Empirical Assessment."

12 Craig and Pencavel, "The Behavior of Worker Cooperatives: The Plywood Companies of the Pacific Northwest."

13 Craig and Pencavel, "Participation and Productivity: A Comparison of Worker Cooperatives and Conventional Firms in the Plywood Industry."

Part III. Recommendations to Create a Supportive Worker Cooperative Ecosystem

Recognizing that cooperatives build human capacity and stronger communities, while decreasing the strain on the public safety net, other U.S. cities have begun to invest in cooperatives and cooperative development. Lessons and experiences from other cities provide many instructive examples for Denver to incorporate on its journey to becoming a hub for the growing cooperative sector. True to cooperative principles, which include cooperation among cooperatives (see Appendix IV), each of our interview subjects was eager to share their experience, including what they would have done differently. CCWB interviewed cooperative leaders and city officials from Minneapolis, New York City, Madison, Cleveland, the Bay Area, and Boston to gain their feedback, advice, and information surrounding the creation of cooperative initiatives in their respective cities.

Based on learned experiences from other cities (see Appendix I), the policies and action steps below represent the necessary building blocks for creating a robust worker cooperative ecosystem in Denver, Colorado. Center for Community Wealth Building (CCWB) recommends that the City and County of Denver thoroughly consider each of the policies and action items below.

A. Support Existing Cooperative Development Programs

Municipal investment in cooperative development has been critical to expanding cooperatives within the cities that CCWB researched. **Expanding the capacity of those already doing the work is the first, and easiest, step in growing the cooperative movement as a whole. CCWB recommends that the City allocate \$500,000 a year from the City of Denver General Fund to invest in cooperative development and support.** It is particularly important to allocate public funding because those who benefit the most from worker cooperatives currently have the least ability to pay for educational and technical support services that are crucial during the business startup or conversion process. To address this gap, grants and fee-for-service RFPs need to be created for the following worker cooperative services:

- Popular education and mass awareness programs to broaden the public's understanding of worker cooperatives and how they benefit our communities
- Incubator programs for startup cooperatives
- Startup bootcamp programs
- Solidarity Circles
- Startup technical assistance programs
- Growth strategy programs

- Business conversion programs
- Formation of a local worker cooperative network, association, or federation

Following the lead of Minneapolis and Madison, CCWB recommends the City also provide grants to startup cooperatives and converting businesses to help them pay for technical assistance or member educational services. In Madison, startup cooperatives were eligible for \$10,000 in grants restricted to obtaining technical assistance services. Likewise, in Minneapolis, startups that had completed the City's 8-week cooperative education program and created a simplified business plan were entitled to \$5,000 in grants to be spent with one of the City's pre-approved technical assistance providers. A recent development aligned with this recommendation is the Colorado Employee Ownership Office's awards for up to \$3,000 in reimbursable grant dollars for businesses that successfully convert to at least 30% employee-owned.

Particularly for low-income entrepreneurs facing gentrification in NEST neighborhoods, municipal grants are essential to reducing cooperative formation costs. Without grant support, Denver is likely to leave behind entrepreneurs and community members who lack access to initial capital, like what happened in New York City. See Section C below for more discussion on approaches to increasing capital access for cooperatives.

B. Train more Cooperative Advocates and Technical Assistance Providers

When a more diverse set of organizations are involved in cooperative development, more worker cooperatives, and therefore, more cooperative jobs are created. For example, Madison and New York City have benefited heavily from the high number of technical service providers in their regions, while Cleveland may have suffered from services being too concentrated in one organization. It would be highly beneficial to train more organizations in the processes of cooperative development and conversion, to extend the benefits of cooperation into communities that current organizations do not have the capacity or social capital to reach.

The first step is to **orient members of DEDO and other economic development agencies** in the City and County of Denver, like the Small Business Development Center, to the cooperative model: what a worker cooperative is, why they are important for our economy, and how the startup and long-term needs of a cooperative differ from those of a traditional business. Furthermore, CCWB encourages the City, in the long term, to consider creating one or more full time positions within DEDO or the Small Business Development Center that focuses specifically on the development of worker cooperatives.

To achieve the proliferation of worker cooperatives, CCWB recommends the **City provide grant funding to organizations to add cooperative development programs to their toolbox**. For example, organizations that already focus on workforce development,

provide services for individuals experiencing homelessness, or are embedded within NEST neighborhoods should be encouraged or given the opportunity to create their own cooperative development and conversion programs. In Madison, grants of up to \$30,000 are available to organizations that want to receive education on the cooperative model in order to expand their capacity to support cooperative development. If implemented, these grants would be reviewed by CCWB or an independent board of stakeholders in the cooperative movement to ensure alignment with existing efforts. The review of these grants by organizations with a vested interest in the growth of the cooperative movement was highly recommended by other cities. In their experience, once grants were made available for cooperative development, there were a number of groups who received grants but did not follow through with the work, thus draining resources from the grant program and having a significant negative effect on outcomes.¹ Therefore, any group that receives a grant through this program must be carefully assessed for alignment and be held to a high standard for outcomes.

Lastly, **programs like Center for Community Wealth Building's Train the Trainer program could greatly expand to reach additional Denver residents.** Train the Trainer is a grassroots-oriented initiative to turn individuals already active in their communities into experts on cooperative education and development. CCWB's first training in 2019 led to 15 nonprofit leaders, business consultants, community leaders, and organizers becoming cooperative educators and developers. As a result, at least five trainers began developing a cooperative, others have used the training to influence larger nonprofits to incorporate cooperative development, while others have served on the board of cooperatives.

Train the Trainer is not only crucial in expanding the reach and capacity of the cooperative movement, but also in empowering community members to utilize a new tool set for equitable development in a rapidly gentrifying city. The program could be expanded through grants that reduce trainee's economic barriers to participation through stipends or that cover trainee costs such as interpretation, childcare, and transportation for target populations.

C. Help Worker Cooperatives Connect with Capital & Grant Funding

Like any business, worker cooperatives need investment capital in order to grow and compete. However, worker cooperatives, particularly those led by low- and moderate-income entrepreneurs, face unique challenges related to accessing credit. Strategies that connect cooperatives to capital are crucial for the worker cooperative movement to grow and, therefore, impact more Denverites.

The first barrier that worker cooperatives face is that traditional lenders, including those that administer SBA loans, require a personal guarantee. Since worker cooperatives share the rewards and ownership of the business with all members, often with each person

1 Schmidt, Interview on Madison, WS Cooperative Policies.

holding a minority stake in the business, personal guarantees are not a feasible way to distribute risks. Traditional lenders have historically not made loans to cooperatives because they do not want to take the risk of lending without a personal guarantee, or they are uncomfortable with the unfamiliar structure of worker cooperatives.

CCWB recommends the City take the following steps to help worker cooperatives overcome this barrier. First, **evaluate the City’s existing economic development tools** for their ability to generate diverse forms of funding for cooperatives. This includes **ensuring that the underwriting practices for the City’s Small Business Loan Fund and the new Small Business Investment Fund are supportive of cooperatives** (i.e. do not require a personal guarantee for cooperatively owned businesses). Second, **design a tool and identify a funding mechanism to support cooperatives, or entities on their behalf, in their planning efforts associated with the startup or conversion of a business to a cooperative**, similar to the City’s Organized Business Support Funding. When cities like Berkeley have taken additional steps to include worker cooperatives in their municipal revolving loan funds, traditional lenders have been more likely to follow suit. Third, **host a series of training sessions for local banks, CDFIs, and credit unions to learn about underwriting practices from national lenders that support cooperatives**, such as Shared Capital, the Working World, or LEAF Fund. These steps will become more urgent if the Capital for Cooperatives Act, currently before Congress, passes and removes the SBA requirement of a personal guarantor.

The second barrier related to capital access is business readiness and education. Low- and moderate-income entrepreneurs have the most to gain from worker cooperatives. However, many of these entrepreneurs are hesitant to borrow because of past negative experiences with debt. To minimize cooperatives’ debt burden, **CCWB encourages the City to provide mini grants to cover the costs related to business formation** (e.g. legal support, technical assistance and marketing support). The majority of worker cooperative owners are women and People of Color, making startup grants a vital tool to further racial and gender equity.

To support capital readiness for low- and moderate-income worker owners, the City could sponsor a series of culturally relevant educational workshops on different aspects of raising capital—from planning a capital stack, to understanding financing options, to preparing a pitch deck. Worker cooperatives allow workers to learn business finances and to make financial decisions together; they are also more likely to be run by women of color, who are the entrepreneurs least likely to receive investment capital.² By sponsoring culturally inclusive training on capital raising, the City will fortify Denver’s worker owners with the knowledge required to find the capital they need and to make the best decisions for their businesses.

Lastly, the City should allocate a portion of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds towards supporting local worker cooperatives.

2 Palmer, “2019 Worker Cooperative Economic Census.”

D. Support Real Estate Acquisition Strategies that Reduce Displacement

Worker cooperatives are one tool to counter displacement, but when they are layered with community-owned real estate, they become even more powerful. Too often, especially when real estate changes hands, local businesses are forced to shut down after paying increasingly higher commercial rents, year after year. Meanwhile, when selling real estate, People of Color (POC) entrepreneurs are likely to face appraisal bias, leading their properties to be undervalued, and when buying real estate, they are likely to face higher interest rates and inequitable access to capital. All of these factors concentrate wealth and power in the hands of the few rather than distributing it for greater shared prosperity.

Throughout the U.S., **community-led groups have been collectively purchasing and owning real estate to increase stability and reduce risk for longstanding POC-owned businesses.** [Community Investment Trusts](#) (CITs), Community Land Trusts (CLT) and [Real Estate Investment Cooperatives](#) (REICs) are tools that democratize ownership of land and commercial real estate to ensure permanent affordability for local businesses.³

CLTs and CITs utilize a nonprofit structure to hold land in a trust, reducing the cost of the improvements and ensuring that the real estate achieves a specific mission. Meanwhile, REICs leverage the power of shared purchasing to reduce acquisition costs. These three forms can be structured to expand democratic decision making about land use and real estate, a critical countermeasure to displacement that gives Denver community members a greater stake in establishing their future. In Minneapolis, Oakland, Atlanta, and Baltimore, everyday residents and commercial tenants have organized trusts and cooperatives to purchase commercial property together.

To reduce commercial real estate displacement, CCWB recommends that **the City both adapt its internal policies and practices as well as pass new ordinances that support community acquisition of commercial real estate.** Internally, the City can utilize its real estate holdings to strategically hold properties and sell them to commercial-tenant-owned cooperatives or trusts once the group has pooled enough capital for a down payment. Philadelphia has adopted land banking strategies like this to prioritize long term affordability. On the ordinance side, the City can pass a tenant opportunity to purchase act (TOPA) that would give commercial tenants a defined period of time to make an offer when their building goes on the market. The State of Colorado, in 2020, enacted a TOPA for mobile home park residents to have the right to purchase land as a cooperative, which has led to more than five communities achieving permanent affordability.

³ For case studies and additional policy innovations see the Iyengar's "*Building Community Wealth: Shifting Power and Capital in Real Estate Finance*" and Shatan & Williams' "*A Guide to Transformative Land Strategies: Lessons from the Field*"

In addition to enabling the collective purchasing of commercial real estate, CCWB recommends that **the City utilize other economic development tools to enable worker cooperatives to acquire real estate.** Recognizing the public benefit that worker cooperatives provide, the City of Cleveland utilized a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district to help the Evergreen Cooperative project acquire real estate for its greenhouse and laundry businesses. Using this economic development tool reduced initial startup costs, putting more people to work sooner. In Denver, TIFs have often resulted in involuntary displacement of communities and legacy businesses. However, if utilized to support real estate acquisition by worker cooperatives, **TIFs and other economic development tools would build community wealth and prevent involuntary displacement.**

E. Encourage Sale to Workers as an Avenue for Business Ownership Succession

Around the country, countless cooperative development organizations and municipalities are shifting their focus from cooperative startup development to cooperative conversions. Currently, baby boomers own 41% of small businesses.⁴ This generation, which is made up of people born between 1946 and 1964, is already past or approaching retirement age, yet 58% of these business owners do not have a plan for succession.⁵ The Evergreen Cooperatives in Cleveland, as well as the worker-owned holding company [Obran Cooperative Corporation](#), have both fully embraced the conversion strategy as one of the fastest ways to increase the number of worker cooperatives. Berkeley, New York City, and Boston have all incorporated sales to workers as one of their main succession strategies when consulting with retiring owners. As a simple first step, **the City could promote Denver-based employee ownership by highlighting successful conversion stories through the Office of Storytelling and the I Am Denver campaign.** The City could also circulate success stories internally when Denver companies are featured in Democracy at Work Institute's [Becoming Employee-Owned](#) or Democracy Collaborative's [Fifty by Fifty](#).

Beyond advocating for sale-to-workers to any existing Succession Planning clients at the City's SBDCs, the City could actively engage business owners across the city. A relatively easy lift is to mail or email an informational graphic to business owners that highlights the power of employee ownership to create a business legacy and to keep Main Street strong and vibrant. Business owners approaching or past retirement age, or those who have been business owners for more than 15 years, are the ideal target audience for this campaign.

An additional strategy to support worker cooperatives as a succession plan, involves **creating mechanisms to help workers obtain the financial means for a worker buyout.** In Central Italy, a Court approved workers to buy out a business with the funds they

⁴ Sherman, "As Baby Boomers Retire, Main Street Could Face a Tsunami of Change."

⁵ "2020 Small Business Trends for Baby Boomers."

would have received from the state in unemployment insurance, because the owner planned to close the business since there was no buyer. The City could partner with the State's Employee Ownership Office to potentially advance a policy that would permit unused unemployment funds, when available, to be used for this purpose or look for other creative ways to advance this public good, where it might create outsized positive economic benefits for workers and the City alike.

Lastly, the City should **explore incentives for ownership conversions, such as allowing businesses to suspend sales tax remittances to offset the legal and accounting fees required to accomplish a business conversion**, or a tax credit for owners of businesses who choose to sell to their employees.

F. Create Procurement Bid Incentives for Worker Cooperatives

Municipal procurement plays a significant role in local economic development, and if worker-owned cooperatives—the majority of whom are POC and women-owned—were to win more City contracts, more money would move directly into the hands of everyday workers, which creates local economic impact, ultimately leading to greater tax revenue and prosperity for City residents.

Other cities recognize that worker cooperatives center the needs of workers and create better economic outcomes for everyone involved. For example, **the City of Berkeley has created a sliding scale of bid discounts for worker cooperatives and for any business that adopts at least three cooperative practices. This bid incentive only applies to small contracts (\$100-25,000).** The City defines these equitable practices as the following:

- board members elected democratically by workers,
- an employee profit-sharing plan,
- capped returns of 15% to outside investors,
- an equitable pay ratio of no more than 5:1.

CCWB recognizes any change to Denver's certification system is long and complex; thus, in the short term, **it is recommended that the City of Denver, like Berkeley, affirm the economic value of worker-centered practices in the City's procurement regulations/policies.** The above practices lead to exponential effects for workers including higher wages and benefits, fewer layoffs, shared prosperity, and greater control. Each of these benefits alone could reduce displacement for Denverites, but combined, they weave a powerful multi-layered safety net for Denver worker owners.

In the long term, CCWB recommends the **City adopt a discount policy for worker cooperatives similar to Berkeley**, which include the following:

- 2% discount if subcontracting 25-50% of the contract price to a Denver worker cooperative,
- 4% discount if contracting more than 50% of the contract price to a Denver worker cooperative,
- 6% discount if the prime contractor is a Denver worker cooperative or joint venture between Denver worker cooperatives,
- 3% discount for a Denver Business with at least three cooperative practices.⁶
- For Denver businesses with cooperative practices the total bid discount should not exceed 5%, while Denver worker cooperatives have no cap on their discount.

Worker ownership discounts have a higher impact than existing discounts and should be given cumulatively to recognize their economic benefits, on top of existing discounts for Women and Minority-Owned Businesses.

While discounts give worker cooperatives an advantage in the City's bidding process, oftentimes the Request for Proposals released by the City can be cumbersome and inaccessible for many small business owners and worker owners. **Therefore, CCWB recommends that the City take additional steps to make the bidding process more accessible to all.** For example, a simplified RFP and smaller contracts - broken out by type of service - will make it easier for small businesses and worker cooperatives to bid and successfully compete. Second, increasing the length of time between when an RFP is posted and when a bid is due helps level the playing field since most small businesses and startup cooperatives do not have office staff devoted to responding to RFPs. Finally, the Division of Small Business Opportunity and contractors should take active steps to build relationships with worker cooperatives and notify them when a contracting or subcontracting opportunity applies to them.

G. Engage Anchor Institutions as Partners

Engaging Anchor Institutions as partners aligns with Richard Florida's recommendation to the City in his 2019 report, *Positioning Denver for Shared and Inclusive Prosperity*. The intention is to generate significant reinvestment into local communities from some of the city's largest economic actors, like hospitals, universities, cultural institutions, the Convention Center, and even the City itself.

In relation to the cooperative sector, Anchor engagement helps minimize the risk for startup and conversion projects. When Anchor Institutions contract with cooperatives they create a stable and local market for cooperatives' products and services. This mitigation of risk is what allowed the Evergreen Initiative to start their highly successful Evergreen Cooperatives, which meets the needs for specific goods and services of multiple anchor institutions in Cleveland. It is also the strategy embraced by Obran

⁶ "Berkeley Policy Summary." Language taken from Berkeley Policy

Cooperative Corporation in their work with Kaiser Permanente's Mid-Atlantic Region. They are identifying companies in Kaiser's supply chain that are ripe for conversion to worker cooperatives. As it turns out, several vendors of interest are located in southern Colorado.

CCWB knows from its own experience and that of colleagues around the country, that Anchor work is propelled by the synergy of municipalities and anchors aligning their commitment to building an inclusive local economy.

Therefore, CCWB recommends increased engagement from DEDO in the Denver Anchor Network (DAN) as both a peer, focused on aligning its own procurement with its community wealth building goals (i.e. lead by example) and as a regional leader and champion that is committing financial and social capital to grow the worker cooperative sector. These actions will send a strong signal to DAN members that they are part of a larger effort to create measurable change for local workers and will propel Anchor Institutions to collectively achieve their potential as catalysts for a more inclusive, local economy.

Specific steps for DEDO include:

- Informing DAN members of the City's plans to invest in the worker cooperative sector;
- Asking DAN members and City agencies to identify potential service contracts that could be; shifted from a Group Purchasing Organization to a local worker cooperative and, subsequently, identifying common needs that generate enough demand for launching a new worker cooperative;
- Asking DAN members and General Services to provide lists of their existing local vendors as potential prospects for conversion to worker cooperatives;
- Inviting DAN members to invest in the City's revolving loan fund or in a loan guarantee pool to help capitalize worker cooperatives (see Section C for more on access to capital).

Engaging simultaneously as a peer and a leader is similar to the approach the City is taking to implement the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP). Through the GFPP coalition, the City and a number of regional anchor institutions are working simultaneously to increase their percentage of food purchased from local farmers and ranchers.

H. Produce Annual Reports on the State of Cooperatives

Like all investments, it is important to understand the impact of the City's investment in cooperatives. It is also important to understand the evolving needs of worker cooperatives, upcoming opportunities, and potential hurdles to ensure that policies are effective. Currently, for example, local data is not fully available on the number of existing worker cooperatives. Annual reports will help identify inefficiencies, overlaps, and opportunities which will make the movement stronger in the long run. It is essential for the annual reports to also collect data on failed cooperatives as this information can be utilized to tailor cooperative support. To maximize the utility of these reports, they should be created in coalition with community organizations engaging in the worker cooperative movement.

I. Give Worker Cooperatives Priority During Licensing and Permitting Processes

From building out a physical space, to getting a commercial property rezoned, to beginning a new occupation, entrepreneurs often face a costly and lengthy process obtaining permits and licenses. Since worker cooperatives have three or more owners, that process can potentially be even longer. Recognizing that new worker cooperatives create higher quality, higher paying jobs, the City of Berkeley has granted exceptions from certain licenses and fees for the first two years of operation for local worker cooperatives.

The City of Denver could expedite the licensing and permitting process or reduce fees for new worker cooperatives to decrease start up barriers. This benefit could additionally incentivize entrepreneurs to choose the cooperative model over other business models.

Meanwhile, recognizing that worker cooperative conversions preserve local jobs and keep dollars circulating locally, the City could also expedite any licensing and permitting for existing businesses who have converted and who may be seeking to expand their operations.

J. Facilitate the Creation of a Cooperative Development Coalition

In both New York City and Madison, cooperative development coalitions have been crucial to coordinating the growth of the cooperative development movement. Cooperative development coalitions include business support organizations, economic development organizations, labor groups, community support organizations, and individual cooperative developers who are engaged in supporting the growth of the cooperative movement. CCWB recommends that the City work with a partner, like CCWB, to co-facilitate and fund, but not lead, the creation of a Cooperative

Development Coalition in Denver with the goal of uplifting low-income and POC communities, especially in DEDO's priority neighborhoods, through cooperative development. This coalition will serve as a space to coordinate efforts, develop strategies, and learn from successes and failures of the cooperative movement, both in Denver and around the country. Though this may not be a crucial step at this moment, as the number of cooperative development and technical assistance organizations grows in Denver, it will become increasingly important to have a space such as this. The coalition must actively seek the input of worker cooperatives in Denver when formulating strategies. If possible, there will be direct worker cooperative participation in the Coalition.

K. Incentivize Employees to Purchase Businesses Being Sold by Owners

Competition between cities and countries to create better business environments has created the well documented "race to the bottom effect." To keep jobs, cities, states, and countries have cut taxes, slashed worker protections, undermined unions, and created subsidies to encourage companies to move to or keep operations in a particular area. This paradigm of public policy has devastated workers' rights and quality of life, and created well known effects like outsourcing. Moreover, acquisitions of local business by large corporations often leads to streamlining of budgets, and therefore, layoffs, not to mention profits leaving the community.

To combat this trend, CCWB urges the City to **pass an ordinance that encourages companies to give their employees the option to buy the company when an owner is looking for an exit strategy.** The City could do so by penalizing companies for not giving employees an option to buy by assessing a fee on the sale price, as is done in France.⁷ Moreover, the City could provide tax incentives for owners who sell to employees. In France, companies with less than 50 employees, or companies with less than 250 employees and an annual revenue of less than 50 million Euros, whose owner intends to sell over 50% of their shares, must give employees at least two months to decide if they want to make an offer to buy the company. Failure to do so results in a fine of 2% on the price of sale.⁸ Ordinances such as this can help to preserve the availability of high-quality jobs for future generations of Denver workers.

7 Bideau et al., "Sale of a French Company and Information for Employees."

8 Bideau et al., "Sale of a French Company and Information for Employees."

L. Integrate Cooperatives into Denver's Workforce Services

Alongside multiple regional partners, Denver workforce programs utilize federal grants to invest in skill-building for entry level workers and to meet the employment needs of industries in Metro Denver. Due to the high costs of training new workers, one of the key indicators for program success is employee retention. One of the ways Denver could further incentivize retention is by influencing nonprofit workforce partners to incorporate worker ownership into their curriculums and job training.

For instance, the healthcare workforce training programs have one of the highest retention rates of any of Denver Workforce Services' programs, with 68% of trainees remaining in the industry. However, even with this high rate, hospitals have experienced unprecedented resignations and have not been able to adequately staff most entry level positions, often turning to staffing agencies to hire traveling nurses and other care workers. These temporary workers earn more than 3x the regular pay of a local nurse. Worker-owned medical staffing agencies could provide a staffing solution that would make more business sense and also meet the needs of workers so they are less likely to face burnout and choose resignation.

Another opportunity for integration is to include appropriate DEDO Workforce Services staff in cooperative training sessions to familiarize them with the model and provide them with pamphlets to share with private sector employer partners who are candidates for conversion.

Part IV. Additional Initiatives

The following initiatives would greatly improve the environment for worker cooperatives; however, they are not the top priority at this time. For the most part, the policies and programs listed below are not less important, they just require more time and effort for the City to implement. They are included for purposes of helping the City think about the long-term needs of the cooperative movement.

M. Integrate Cooperative Development Curriculum into Education Systems

A current key limitation in the cooperative movement is the lack of qualified cooperative developers or conversion specialists. On one hand, this need emerges from the cooperative movement sitting halfway between business development and community organizing. On the other hand, it also emerges from the fact that the cooperative movement has very little representation in our education system. Cooperative development programming at all levels of the education system – pre-K thru 12, as well as in higher education – would help steer community-minded individuals in a much-needed direction. The City can advocate for the creation of cooperative development curriculum and programs by leveraging its networks and by providing direct funding for implementation.

N. Create a Hub of Democratized Development ¹

The City could support the creation of a community-owned hub, which would serve as a center for worker cooperatives and be owned in a commercial community land trust (CLT) or real estate investment cooperative (REIC). Recently the City has been given the imperative to utilize city-owned land to benefit all of its constituents, particularly its most marginalized residents. By using publicly owned space, like the National Western Center, to focus on community ownership and worker ownership, the City could demonstrate its commitment to a more prosperous future. The community hub would be held under a CLT or REIC, with cooperative businesses renting or owning the buildings. Not only would this project preserve affordable commercial and retail space for the local community, but it would also be an example of equitable development that would inspire more people to create cooperatives. As humans, we often struggle to imagine alternate futures, even in current times when doing so is becoming increasingly important. Having a concentrated space for cooperative and community-oriented models of development to thrive would serve as an example of a new future for Denver residents and for Americans across the country.

¹ “NYC’s Future Is Cooperative- A Policy Platform.” Inspired by New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives Policy Platform

O. Charter a Municipal Bank ²

The City of Denver could create a publicly owned, commercial bank that frees up public dollars to invest in public benefits like the creation of new worker cooperatives and the conversion of existing businesses to cooperatives. Currently, most cities in the U.S. pay hundreds of millions of dollars in fees and interest to large corporate banks and investors. By creating a public utility in the form of a municipal bank, the City would eliminate middlemen and provide civically oriented capital to serve the needs and interests of Denver's local community, an alternative to the speculative capital of global financial institutions.

Municipal banks can be directed to fund many kinds of local businesses. By creating products specifically for worker cooperatives, the City would expand broad-based ownership within the Denver community and would reduce barriers to starting cooperatives. Further, a municipal bank could set funding priorities that align with the needs of the communities who have been historically excluded from private financial service institutions. Finally, a publicly-owned bank would address a key concern underlying the City's priority of sustainable development—the ability to find reliable financing for equitable and sustainable development projects.

Currently, the two U.S. public banks include the state-owned 99-year-old Bank of North Dakota and, as of October 2021, the newly authorized municipal bank of Los Angeles. Meanwhile, multiple U.S. cities, including San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, Seattle, Philadelphia, Santa Fe, Houston, and Chattanooga, are actively exploring the creation of municipal-level public banks, and Denver could innovate alongside their ranks.

² "NYC's Future Is Cooperative- A Policy Platform." Inspired by New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives Policy Platform

Appendix I. Learning From Other Cities

Berkeley¹

Population: 124,321 residents

Annual Budget: \$196.9 Million in 2020

In 2017, in response to rapid gentrification and the struggles faced by low and middle wage workers to afford to stay in their communities, the Berkeley City Council passed some of the most comprehensive worker cooperative policies in the United States. The City defines Berkeley worker cooperatives (BWCs) as any cooperative that has elected to be a worker cooperative, or any LLC or other entity type that has: the majority of voting power held by workers; the majority of workers being owners; a board of directors democratically elected by the workers (if there is one); and a majority of allocated earnings distributed on the basis of work done for the cooperative. Berkeley also defines Businesses with Cooperative Practices (BCPs) as businesses that demonstrate at least three of the following practices: “board members elected democratically by workers; an employee profit-sharing plan; capped returns of 15% to outside investors; or an equitable pay ratio of no more than 5:1.”

Berkeley created a sliding scale of discounts for BWCs and BCPs that apply in the bidding process for procuring city contracts. All these discounts can be stacked on top of the already existing 5% “Buy Local” discount. The new law states that subcontracting with BWC(s) for 25-50% of the contract price will result in a 2% discount, while subcontracting 50% or more with BWC(s) will result in a 4% discount. If the prime contractor is a BWC or is a joint venture between only BWCs, then the discount rate is 6%. For BCPs, the discount is a flat 3%, with a maximum discount of 5% for BCPs. Finally, the policy mandates that the City actively seek bids from BWCs and that contractors must actively seek out BWC subcontractors, when applicable.

The policy also mandates the City to enhance its current business support programs to include support for worker cooperatives. The Small Business Office has to provide resources, education, and referrals for BWCs and businesses seeking to convert to a worker cooperative. Moreover, the City appointed a City Liaison to “identify barriers worker cooperatives face in accessing benefits, (create) incentives for businesses to transition to worker ownership, and support the Worker Cooperative Advisory Council in meeting its goals.” The City was also required to train or hire a new staff member at the Office of Economic Development (OED) to develop worker cooperative expertise. Finally, the City must “convene regular interagency and stakeholder meetings to advance the co-op support strategy,” and subsequently, create and submit annual reports on the progress of the movement and the goals for the following year.

¹ “Berkeley Policy Summary.” The entirety of this section is a synopsis of this document, unless otherwise noted. The original draft of the Berkeley Worker Cooperative Ordinance can be found here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1v1jp6xlSbb6Lb2ecLem3IZZz_hocKnBNcLSrr5Esg8k/edit#heading=h.4ndey6vn6ilr

Furthermore, Berkeley has committed itself to facilitating and advocating for the sale of existing businesses in the city to their employees. The City Council mandated that the government host events, conduct site visits, and create a plan around encouraging the sale to workers as a primary succession plan, particularly for businesses over 15 years old with primarily low-wage workers. The Office of Economic Development would also have to include selling to workers in their strategic planning services to employers. Annually, the City must report on the “number of small business closures, long-operating businesses, and businesses that received succession planning services from the City,” and utilize this information to set the next year’s succession planning goals.

In working with OED, Yassi Eskandari of the Sustainable Economies Law Center (SELC), the lead policy advocate in the Bay Area, described OED’s buy-in as crucial to the program’s success, going beyond a mandate from the Mayor’s office.² Eskandari noted that they worked closely with OED to ensure that the programs emerging from the Mayor’s ordinance aligned with the existing programs being implemented at OED, in order to minimize duplicate work from an already thinly stretched staff. Moreover, the Office mobilized surplus funding that was not being utilized due to being understaffed in years before, to commission a study through Project Equity to examine the local business environment and the impact of small businesses.³ The study found that small businesses generated the majority of tax revenue and employed the majority of Berkeley’s residents. Furthermore, the study found that many of these businesses were owned by baby boomers without succession plans, and therefore were at risk of being shut down when the owners retired. This study proved to OED that not only were small businesses crucial to the local economy, but conversion to worker ownership was one of the best ways to preserve jobs being created by the existing small businesses. Since then, OED, Project Equity, SELC, and other organizations have worked closely together to provide a wide range of technical assistance and support services to start up worker cooperatives and business conversions.⁴

Next, the policy has set several grant funding commitments to further cooperative development in the city. First, the Worker Cooperative Incubation and Conversion Program has created grants to support non-profits and other organizations which give technical assistance or financial support to cooperatives or business conversions. The Non-Profit and Cooperative Training Program gives grants to cooperatives or non-profits to be trained in how to lead incubation programs in low-income communities. Finally, for conversions, there is the Cooperative Conversion Technical Assistance Matching Fund, which provides matching grants for businesses wishing to explore converting to a worker cooperative.

The City has also taken measures to ensure that worker cooperatives have access to their existing revolving loan fund. The policy mandates that Berkeley takes efforts to spread awareness of the fund in the worker cooperative sector, clarify and simplify the

2 Eskandari, Interview on Bay Area Cooperative Policy.

3 Eskandari.

4 Eskandari.

application process for BWCs, expand the fund's scope to include the purchase of a business by its workers, and include the creation or retention of worker-owned jobs as a factor when considering funding. Lastly, the city pledged to "study (the) feasibility of providing loan guarantees for commercial loans to cooperatives or businesses converting to worker ownership, thereby expanding access to funding on more favorable terms." Since then, the City, led by Sarah Stevens, who at the time worked for SELC and now works for the City of Berkeley, has amended the revolving loan fund to remove personal guarantees and underwrite loans in a way that was more conducive to lending to cooperatives.⁵

Finally, Berkeley has allowed for BWCs to be exempt from city business license fees and taxes for the first two years. Moreover, they have given permission to the City Manager to waive or defer permitting fees related to construction and improvement and ensured that permits for properties owned by BWCs are prioritized and streamlined.

New York City

Population: 8,820,000 residents

Annual Budget: \$92.02 Billion in 2021

New York City began its cooperative development program in 2014, when Mayor Bill de Blasio's administration initiated the Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative (WCBDI), which was subsequently passed by the City Council. The WCBDI is currently seen as one of the most effective set of strategies for increasing the number and density of worker cooperatives in any municipality,⁶ and therefore, has become a national model for how to boost worker job security, wages, and autonomy. The initiative has allocated funding each year, since 2015, for the many worker cooperative support organizations. In the initiative's first year, the City distributed 1.2 million dollars to 10 support organizations, which led to the creation of 21 worker cooperatives.⁷ Since 2015, funding and the number of partner organizations have only increased. In 2020, the city allocated 3.6 million dollars in funding to 13 partner organizations.⁸

The efficacy of the WCBDI can be derived largely from the number and diversity of partner organizations. Funding is focused on five key areas: worker cooperative conversion, worker cooperative start-up, One-on-One technical support, worker cooperative legal support, and worker cooperative funding support.⁹

5 Eskandari.

6 Dubb, "Building a Worker Co-Op Ecosystem."

7 "Working Together: A Report on the First Year of the Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative."

8 "Working Together: A Report on the Sixth Year of the Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative."

9 "Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative - NYC Business."

The conversion program utilizes a website and hotline to direct current business owners to support in the conversion process. The program is known as the [Owner to Owners Hotline](#), and is the best funded conversion program in any municipality. The city's Small Business Services Office works in collaboration with The Working World, the Business Outreach Center (BOC) Network, the ICA Group, and the Democracy at Work Institute to provide ownership conversion services through the "Owner to Owners" program.¹⁰

The City provides funding to a diverse group of cooperative startup support organizations. The organizations that partner with the City in supporting startups are Center for Family Life, Green Worker Cooperatives, Urban Upbound, and the Workers' Justice Project. Interestingly, only Green Worker Cooperative was started as a worker cooperative development organization. The three other cooperative startup support organizations are more broadly focused on poverty alleviation and workforce development in low-income, POC communities in the city, with cooperative development being one facet of their work. It is important to note that all the partner organizations are led by People of Color, who are representative of the communities being served.

For One-on-One technical assistance, the City refers existing cooperatives to the following organizations: the Bronx Cooperative Development, the Business Outreach Center Network, CAMBA, the Democracy at Work Institute, the ICA Group, and the New York City Network of Worker Cooperative (NYCNoWC)¹¹. Again, the number of support organizations ensures that the cooperatives receive technical assistance that is relevant to the problems they face and are culturally appropriate. NYCNoWC is also the local trade federation for worker cooperatives, and therefore provides other crucial services to cooperatives which support the growth of the cooperative ecosystem more broadly.

Next, the legal support for worker cooperatives in the City is provided by the Community Economic Development Clinic at the City University of New York Law School and by TakeRoot Justice, a Legal Justice organization.¹²

Finally, the access to capital is provided by The Working World. The Working World provides non-extractive finance to worker cooperatives in New York City and around the country.¹³ This is an essential service as most financial institutions are uncomfortable making loans to worker cooperatives. In many contexts, access to capital is one of the biggest barriers to worker cooperative development.

All in all, the diversity of partners in the WCBDI has allowed for New York City's cooperative ecosystem to flourish. Not only does the structure of the initiative ensure that partner organizations are not stretched too thin in their work, but it also leverages the connection and trust that existing organizations have in low-income neighborhoods and communities. New York City has the most comprehensive cooperative funding strategies in the nation; however, issues still exist.

10 "Owner to Owners | Business Transition Hotline."

11 "Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative - NYC Business."

12 "Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative - NYC Business."

13 "Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative - NYC Business."

Some reflections on the policies implemented by NYC were shared in an interview with Saduf Syal, from the New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives (NYCNoWC).¹⁴ Saduf shared that the implementation of the City's policies happened very quickly, and therefore there have been some issues with the WCBDI. Chief among these issues was the lack of startup funding for worker cooperatives. She felt that while non-profits, like NYCNoWC, had access to a significant amount of funding for their programs, startup cooperatives had almost no access to funding. This not only created tension in the community, but also was a key limitation that held back the development of many cooperatives.¹⁵ The proposed solution to this problem was either to establish a new revolving loan program for cooperatives or expand the existing small business revolving loan program to include cooperatives. Furthermore, Saduf noted that it was challenging for the SBSB to fully understand cooperatives from their traditional business framework and that this lack of understanding led to less meaningful support offered to cooperatives. Moreover, cooperative leaders feel that the SBSB is not using the right metrics to evaluate the success of the cooperatives. When working with traditional small businesses, the SBSB tends to measure things like growth in income and profitability of the business; meanwhile, cooperatives want the department to measure things like impact on the community or increase in income for workers. Lastly, Saduf would like to see better data on failed cooperatives and the issues that led to their failure.¹⁶ This will help the movement learn from its failures and therefore be better equipped to address the needs of struggling cooperatives.

Madison

Population: 273,469 residents

Annual Budget: \$249 Million in 2021

Madison, Wisconsin has committed more to the cooperative movement, relative to its population size, than any other municipality in the United States. In 2014 the City of Madison, spearheaded by Mayor Paul Soglin, approved a budget initiative that began in 2016 to allocate 3.2 million dollars over 5 years for cooperative development.¹⁷ The City then helped to form a coalition of local community organizations, labor unions, and cooperative developers to define the agenda and set the goals for the City's new cooperative initiative. Out of this, the Madison Cooperative Development Coalition (MCDC) was formed; the coalition is housed under the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The coalition is made up of a large number of organizations with diverse backgrounds including: Centro Hispano of Dane County, Chamber for Black Economic Empowerment, Cooperative Network, Democracy at Work Network, Freedom Inc., Heartland Credit Union, Interpreters' Cooperative of Madison, Latino Chamber of Commerce of Dane County, Latino Professionals Association of Greater Madison, IUPAT 802, Madison Development Corporation, MadWorC, Northside Planning Council, Operation Welcome

¹⁴ Syal, Interview on State of Cooperative Policy in New York City.

¹⁵ Syal.

¹⁶ Syal.

¹⁷ Schmidt, Interview on Madison, WS Cooperative Policies.

Home, Opportunity Inc., Shared Capital Cooperative, SMART Local 18 and Local 565, South Central Federation of Labor, ReSCI Consulting, Workers' Rights Center, WRTP/Big Step, UFCW 1473, University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives, and the Young Gifted and Black Coalition.¹⁸ The funding provided by the City is divided up, with half going to funding for nonprofits in the cooperative development movements, and half going to a revolving loan fund for startup cooperatives.¹⁹ The loan fund is managed by the Madison Development Coalition.²⁰ This division of funds helps ensure that the organizations driving the cooperative movement are funded, and at the same time ensures that cooperative startups in traditionally marginalized communities have the funding to create a business.

The MCDC offers grants and services for both cooperative startups and community organization partners. For startup cooperatives, the MCDC offers a rolling, non-competitive grant program with funding of up to \$10,000 to cover technical assistance, development, and outreach, as well as providing crucial connections to partner organizations which can provide loans for startup costs and other financing needs.²¹ This money cannot be used as capital for items like infrastructure or machinery, and must be used toward services from local service providers.²² Moreover, the MCDC can provide education on the cooperative model, support and advice from their peer network, business planning, legal assistance, and other technical assistance, and can connect startups to other organizations and labor unions for training, benefits packages, and resources.²³ Since the MCDC staff is very limited, the majority of their support services are done through partner organizations and cooperatives.²⁴

For community-based organizations, MCDC provides grants of up to \$30,000 to help organizations participate in cooperative development. The MCDC will also provide organizations with training and capacity building assistance to equip organizations to begin assisting startup cooperatives. This is part of a strategy to bring in community organizations with existing connections in communities the coalition wishes to serve. Applicant organizations are reviewed by an advisory board made up of local stakeholders in the cooperative movement.²⁵ Furthermore, the coalition will assist organizations with outreach and community organizing, development of educational materials, and help organize workshops that are relevant for specific communities.²⁶

18 "Madison Coalition Begins Cooperative Enterprise for Job Creation and Business Development Program - CALS News."

19 Schmidt, Interview on Madison, WS Cooperative Policies.

20 Schmidt.

21 "MCDC Fall 2019 Brochure."

22 Schmidt, Interview on Madison, WS Cooperative Policies.

23 "MCDC Fall 2019 Brochure."

24 Schmidt, Interview on Madison, WS Cooperative Policies.

25 Schmidt.

26 "MCDC Fall 2019 Brochure."

The MCDC also provides long-term support to cooperatives. The initiative noted that the need for this varies by cooperative, with some cooperatives needing high amounts of support and others needing little to none.²⁷

Lastly, MCDC collaborates with the Democracy at Work Institute's national Workers to Owners initiative, which focuses on converting existing businesses to cooperatives. Prior to COVID, the coalition organized small to medium size manufacturers that had the potential to be converted.²⁸ Unfortunately, due to capacity limitations this initiative has been paused, though MCDC is working to relaunch the program.²⁹

Charity Schmidt, who has been the sole employee of the MCDC since the beginning of the program, shared reflections on the pitfalls and successes of Madison's cooperative development strategy.³⁰ In her view, the distribution of funding over a five-year period was an advantage for the coalition not shared by NYC's WCBDI. She shared that writing grants takes up a large portion of the capacity of the organization, therefore, not having to write grants or justify the program's existence annually has allowed them to focus on the work that needs to be done.³¹ Schmidt also reflected on issues that arose during the creation of the coalition. The founder of the coalition really hoped to bring in as many community partner organizations as possible. Unfortunately, some of these organizations did not share the same goals or democratic values that were integral to the cooperative movement. She felt that many organizations joined the project solely because of the large amount of funding being offered. This led to conflict and slow progress in the early days of the coalition, however, these partners were slowly pushed out and the work progressed quickly once alignment was established. In hindsight, Schmidt wished they had chosen who to invite more carefully, to ensure that organizations were there to build the cooperative movement and collaborate democratically, instead of only being involved to grow their annual budget.³²

Minneapolis

Population: 435,105 residents

Annual Budget: \$1.6 Billion in 2021

Minnesota has a legacy of cooperatives in the state, with over 1000 cooperatives and 3.4 million cooperative members, though the majority of these cooperatives are consumer or producer owned, not worker owned.³³ Minneapolis, however, has taken a considerably less comprehensive and involved approach to cooperative development than the cities described thus far.

27 Schmidt, Interview on Madison, WS Cooperative Policies.

28 Schmidt.

29 Schmidt.

30 Schmidt.

31 Schmidt.

32 Schmidt.

33 Anderson and Pierson, "Cooperatives in Minneapolis: An Inventory and Assessment."

Prior to 2016, the City utilized its Business Technical Assistance Program (B-TAP) to provide funding and additional support for startup worker cooperatives. Up until 2016, B-TAP provided roughly \$4.4 million in loans to cooperatives, working with cooperatives to provide some loans that did not require personal guarantees to back them, something most financial institutions will not do.³⁴ The founder of B-TAP, Daniel Bonilla, was familiar with the cooperative model, since they are a common and useful business form in his home country of Costa Rica.³⁵ Therefore, he was comfortable allowing cooperatives to utilize the services provided by B-TAP. In 2016, however, a group of cooperatives approached Bonilla complaining that B-TAP was not designed for the needs of cooperatives. Initially, Bonilla was defensive, he felt that cooperatives were just another form of small business and did not require special attention. To his credit, in response to the complaints, he conducted a study to better understand the difference in the technical assistance needs of a cooperative versus a traditional business. He learned that cooperatives do have specific needs that would justify a new program: namely, cooperatives on average take about 3 years to become fully operational, while a traditional business takes only 8 months and compared to traditional businesses, cooperatives are particularly good at empowering those with limited resources, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, to become business owners.³⁶

Therefore, the City launched the Cooperative Technical Assistance Program (C-TAP) to expand and focus on its services to cooperatives.³⁷ Unlike New York and Madison, this initiative is not guided by the community partners. Rather, it is centrally controlled by the City's Community Planning and Economic Development Office. Nevertheless, the City contracts with the following organizations to provide technical assistance services to cooperatives: the Black Women's Health Alliance, ConnectUP! Institute, Co-opera Co./M Lund Associates, Cooperative Development Services, Nexus Community Partners: Worker Ownership Initiative, Davis Law Office, Hortensia Law Office, and Just Law, LLC.

These contracts are awarded through RFPs if the contract is over \$100,000.³⁸ Bids are reviewed by a committee composed of members of the C-TAP staff, as well as some outside members from the city government. When a group first comes to C-TAP they enroll in a class, which meets 1 hour a week for 8 weeks. By the end of this course, participants have created a "co-op profile," or a simpler version of a business plan. Once a group gets to this point, C-TAP feels confident in investing more resources into them.³⁹ Next is the feasibility and start up stage. Grants up to \$5,000 are awarded to the cooperatives to seek out technical assistance from one of the City-approved consultants. Technical assistance continues even after a business is launched. In fact, Daniel Bonilla noted that the period directly after opening is often the most challenging time for business owners. Therefore, they created the Advanced Technical Assistance Program to assist the businesses with issues related to topics like marketing, human resources, or

34 Kerr, "Local Government Support for Cooperatives."

35 Bonilla, Interview on Minneapolis CTAP Program.

36 Bonilla.

37 Minneapolis, "Co-Operative Technical Assistance Program (C-TAP) Landing Page."

38 Bonilla, Interview on Minneapolis CTAP Program.

39 Bonilla.

cost management. Cooperatives utilizing the Advanced Technical Assistance Program are only entitled to 6 to 10 hours of technical assistance a year, therefore incentivizing them to only come to C-TAP with their most pressing issues.⁴⁰

In hindsight, Bonilla noted that the main thing he would have added to the C-TAP program was its own loan fund. He felt that zero percent loans, low interest loans, or gap loans would have provided needed capital to start up cooperatives, as well as provided an incentive for cooperatives to go through the C-TAP program.⁴¹

Oakland

Population: 445,849 residents

Annual Budget: \$1.7 Billion in 2021

Oakland, California, and the Bay Area, more broadly, are home to the highest concentration of worker cooperatives in the country,⁴² with 55 worker cooperatives in 2019.⁴³ In 2015, the Oakland City Council passed a resolution recognizing the value of worker cooperatives for the local economy and residents. The resolutions also called for the local Business Assistance Center to provide cooperative specific resources created by community organizations and to refer cooperative startup or conversion projects to local technical assistance providers.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, no other policies have been implemented by the City since then.⁴⁵ While Oakland has been unable to advance worker cooperative policies since 2015 due to an overwhelmed local government, the City has served as inspiration for the impressive actions taken in both Berkeley and Santa Clara.⁴⁶

Cleveland

Population: 376,599 residents

Annual Budget: \$659 Million in 2020

In Cleveland, the partnership between the worker cooperative movement and the city government happened largely by chance. In 2008, a group of large Cleveland-based institutions including the Cleveland Foundation, the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, and Case Western Reserve University formed the now well-known Evergreen Cooperative Initiative. The Initiative leveraged the economic power of these large

40 Bonilla.

41 Bonilla.

42 Washington and Mcelhaney, Oakland Resolution Supporting the Development of Worker Cooperatives.

43 Palmer, "2019 Worker Cooperative Economic Census."

44 Washington and Mcelhaney, Oakland Resolution Supporting the Development of Worker Cooperatives.

45 Eskandari, Interview on Bay Area Cooperative Policy.

46 Eskandari.

institutions, known as Anchor Institutions⁴⁷, to support the creation and growth of worker cooperatives in Cleveland. An official from the City happened to hear about the project and reached out to the Evergreen Initiative to see if the City could provide financial assistance. It just so happened that the Initiative had recently been rejected by a local bank for funding and was somewhat desperate.⁴⁸ The City offered to step in and a partnership was formed.

The City offered the Initiative a loan package, with low interest loans ranging from one to three percent interest, as well as non-school Tax Increment Financing to fund a proposed greenhouse.⁴⁹ In total, the City of Cleveland gave \$11.8 million in loans to the Evergreen Initiative's three cooperative startups, with the majority of these funds being loaned to the City through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Economic Development Administration.⁵⁰ Some of the loans fell under a program known as HUD 108 or the Empowerment Zone loans, which leverage future Federal Block Grants to secure low interest loans to cities from the Federal Government. The City acquired \$1.5 Million in HUD 108 loans at 1.5% interest rates and gave the loans out at 3.5% to the Evergreen Cooperatives, with the 2% difference going to a positive arbitrage fund to ensure that the City could continue payments to the Federal Government should the Evergreen Cooperatives run into trouble.⁵¹

As of March 2021, the three Evergreen Cooperatives – Evergreen Cooperative Laundry (industrial laundry), Evergreen Energy Solutions (a solar company), and Green City Growers (local urban farm), had over 320 employees. Of those 320 employees, roughly 85 are worker-owners, and in 2020 these 85 worker-owners took home roughly \$960,000 in dividends, meaning each worker took home, on average, over \$11,000 in dividends for the year.⁵² This is an extremely significant amount considering that the workers come from neighborhoods where the annual median income is \$18,500.⁵³

Recently, the Evergreen Cooperatives have shifted strategies from starting cooperatives to meet the procurement needs of large Anchor Institutions to taking advantage of the massive wave of retiring baby boomer business owners by purchasing traditional small businesses and converting them into worker cooperatives.⁵⁴ This strategy is intended to increase the growth rate of Evergreen Cooperatives.

47 Anchor Institutions are place-based, mission-driven entities such as universities, hospitals, and government agencies that leverage their economic power alongside their human and intellectual resources to improve the long-term health and social welfare of their communities. See "Anchor Institution." Denver Health

48 Camou, "Cities Developing Worker Co-Ops: Efforts in Ten Cities."

49 Camou.

50 Camou, "Cities Developing Worker Co-Ops: Efforts in Ten Cities"; Nichols, Interview on City Involvement in the Evergreen Cooperatives.

51 Nichols, Interview on City Involvement in the Evergreen Cooperatives.

52 Khan, "Evergreen Cooperatives Adapt and Grow."

53 Khan.

54 Barry, "Evergreen Cooperatives Helps Companies Shift to Co-Ops, Share Profits with Workers | Evergreen Cooperatives."

Boston⁵⁵

Population: 675,647 residents

Annual Budget: \$3.61 Billion in 2020

The City of Boston's Cooperative program was initiated within the Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics. While there was never a formal bill or statement from the City Council, the New Urban Mechanics Office saw worker cooperatives as a key tool for equitable development. In 2015 or 2016, the Office incorporated support for worker cooperatives into two key areas. First, the Office created a campaign promoting sale-to-workers as a potential succession strategy for retiring baby boomer business owners. Second, the City incorporated worker cooperatives into their existing small business support programs. The City contracted with Boston Center for Community Ownership, a local cooperative support nonprofit, to provide technical assistance to startup cooperatives and to identify opportunities for conversion projects. The City assisted in the founding of two very successful cooperatives, an immigrant-women-owned cleaning cooperative and Democracy Brewing Cooperative.

Unfortunately, the champion of cooperatives in the New Urban Mechanics Office left the City. This was a major blow to the City's progress in growing the number of cooperatives, however, the City still offers cooperative technical assistance to aspiring worker-owners through their small business program.⁵⁶ Moreover, funds given to the City through the recent ARPA stimulus package are available for small businesses and cooperatives alike. Emily Patrick, from the Office of Economic Development, recognizes that while support for cooperatives is available in Boston, more work needs to be done to publicize the worker cooperative model to the community.⁵⁷ Particularly, she noted that the City needs to teach business owners who want to retire, about the benefits of selling to their employees, as most of them lack familiarity or have discomfort with this option. She confirmed that the City still views worker cooperatives as an important strategy for building community wealth and addressing inequality and hopes that the new administration will expand the City's cooperative efforts.⁵⁸

55 Patrick, Interview on Boston Cooperative Policies. All the information in this section was obtained from the interview cited here.

56 Patrick.

57 Patrick.

58 Patrick.

Appendix II. Cities At-A-Glance

| | Berkeley | New York City | Madison | Minneapolis | Oakland | Cleveland | Boston |
|--|------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Year City Efforts Started | 2017 | 2014 | 2014 | Unknown | 2015 | 2008 | 2015 |
| Population of City (2021) | 124,321 | 8.82 million | 273,469 | 435,105 | 445,849 | 376,599 | 675,647 |
| Total City Budget | \$196.9 M (2020) | \$92.02 B (2021) | \$249 M (2021) | \$1.6 B (2021) | \$1.7 B (2021) | \$659 M (2020) | \$3.61 B (2020) |
| City Council Resolutions &/or Legislated Policies | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Co-op Startup and Conversion Support included in City Business Assistance Programs | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| In-House Co-op Development or Conversion Expertise | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| Procurement Bid Discounts or Incentives | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Access to City's Existing Capital Resources for Small Business | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| Special treatment regarding licenses, fees & taxes | ✓ | | | | | | |
| City Outreach, Education & Support for Business Conversions | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| Grants or Contracts to Nonprofits who Provide Co-op TA, Including Legal Support | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Grants to Co-ops and Businesses Converting to Co-ops | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | For TA Only | | | |
| Grants to Co-ops and Nonprofits for Co-op Development Training | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | |
| Co-op Boot Camp or Incubation programs | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| Support for Local Trade Federation for Worker Co-ops | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| Access to Capital Specifically for Co-ops | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | |

Appendix III. The Path Forward

Below is a concrete implementation plan to advance the above recommendations, producing both a documented model focused on impacted communities and a robust worker-ownership movement with increased density in Denver of high-impact worker-owned cooperatives.

Vision: Denver as the national leader in cooperative development, supporting stable and meaningful jobs in order to foster a resilient, inclusive, and robust economy that stabilizes gentrifying neighborhoods through economic empowerment of legacy residents and businesses, which fortifies them to withstand future challenges.

Implementation Plan

The following plan outlines how Denver will go from a city with a small number of worker cooperatives to being the national leader in cooperative ownership over a period of 5-7 years. The plan is organized into 8 focus areas with five distinct phases for each area:

-  Education
-  Marketing & Awareness
-  Cooperative Developer Cultivation
-  Cooperative Startup Support
-  Cooperative Capacity Building & Growth
-  Cooperative Conversion Support
-  Access to Markets
-  Access to Capital

This is an extremely comprehensive plan, and requires a significant increase in funding, capacity, and commitment from the City in order to be accomplished.

Key Terms

Book Clubs

A 1-2 month popular education group for community members and aspiring entrepreneurs to come together to learn about the history of democratically-controlled businesses, land and housing.

Incubation

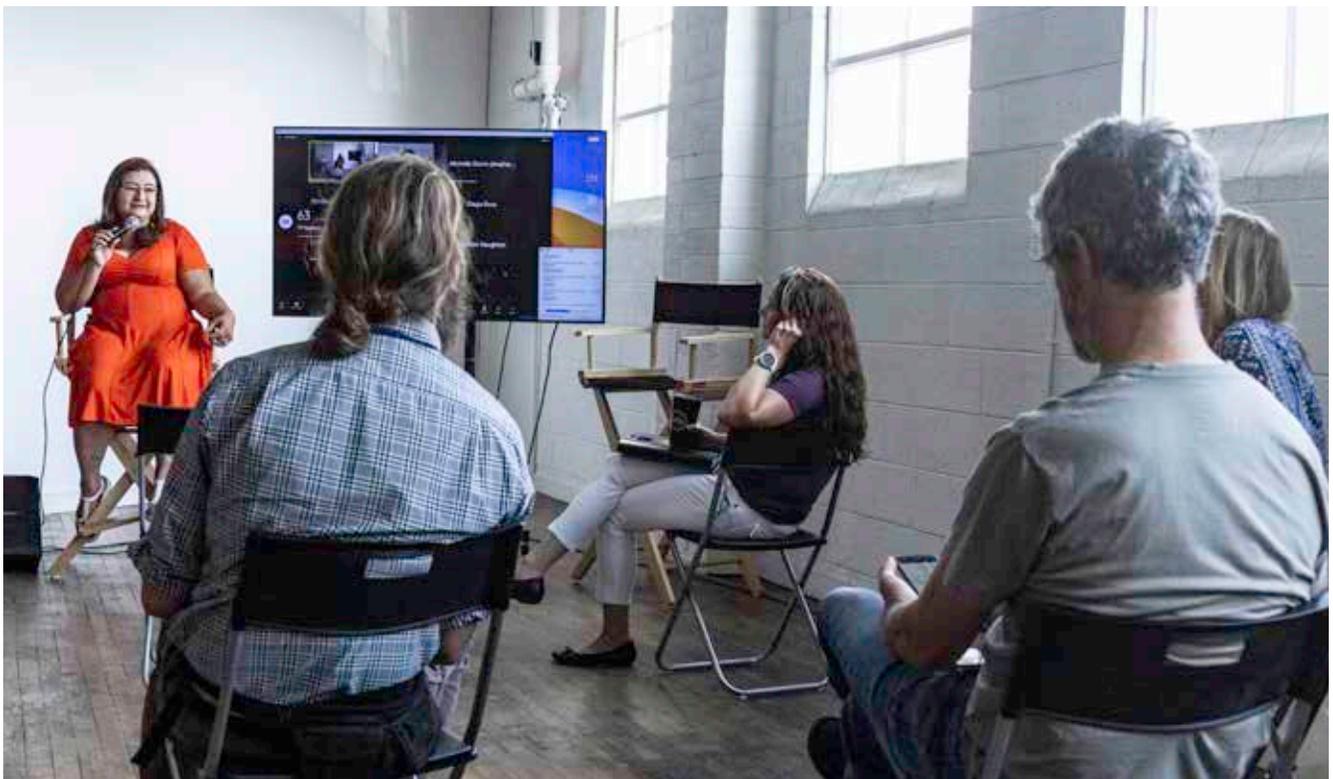
A 4-6-month, high-touch business formation process for existing workers or entrepreneurs that provides an adaptive curriculum to meet the needs of a large contract identified by Anchor Institutions or to respond to an industry-specific opportunity identified by entrepreneurs. Our approach is adaptive in order to ensure that each worker owner grows to their highest capacity through holistic leadership development and healthy team development.

Bootcamp

A 2-3 month, medium-touch business formation process for entrepreneurs with a business idea or some business experience that provides accountability, coaching and a structured curriculum.

Solidarity Circles

A 3-5 month, popular education process for aspiring entrepreneurs that introduces business concepts in a hands-on learning environment and provides the opportunity for developing trust, exploring feasibility of business ideas, and drafting an original business plan together.



EDUCATION

Purpose: To create awareness of the worker cooperative model and the benefits of cooperatives in our local communities.

| City's Role/Actions | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 3 | Phase 4 | Phase 5 |
|---|--|---|---|--|---------|
| <p>-City Council ordinance recognizing and defining cooperatives, naming the benefits.</p> <p>-Maximize City communication platforms to increase reach.</p> | <p>-Design and facilitate Co-op 101s (Intros, Models, Orientation)</p> <p>-Design and facilitate Co-op 201s (How-to steps)</p> <p>-Design and facilitate Co-op 301s (Deep dive in legal, accounting, etc)</p> <p>-Design and facilitate business conversion presentations targeting business owners</p> <p>-Facilitate community, labor, youth & place-based group presentations</p> <p>-Facilitate community book clubs and learning groups</p> <p>-Training promotoras(es) and community navigators on the cooperative model</p> <p>-Identify or create educational materials (i.e., videos, web courses, etc.)</p> <p>-Develop and track evaluation metrics</p> | <p>-Implement phase 1 & 2 activities</p> <p>-Facilitate panel discussions with other co-ops</p> <p>-Develop education for industries that are most lucrative for cooperatives</p> <p>-Conduct industry specific outreach</p> <p>-Build relationships with community colleges, trade schools, and universities</p> <p>-Secure buy-in from community colleges, trade schools, and universities to incorporate co-op education</p> | <p>-Implement phase 1-3 activities</p> <p>-Build relationships with high schools to incorporate co-ops into extracurricular programming</p> <p>-Co-develop a plan to incorporate co-op education at community colleges, trade schools, and universities</p> | <p>-Continue Phase 1-4 Activities</p> <p>-Begin teaching cooperative curriculum at community colleges and universities</p> | |

MARKETING & AWARENESS

Purpose: To increase community engagement in cooperatives by fostering a culture of support.

| City's Role/Actions | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 3 | Phase 4 | Phase 5 |
|---|--|--|--|---------|---|
| <p>-Use "I Am Denver" storytelling campaign for co-ops to share their stories</p> <p>-Promote Co-op Month (October) with City Council members</p> <p>-Embed co-op stories into City communications</p> <p>-Implement Co-op City ad campaigns to expose people to the idea of co-ops and what a cooperative city could look like (ads on buses, light rail, billboards)</p> <p>-Market Denver as the national hub for cooperatives or best place to start a co-op</p> <p>Partners: Marketing & Communications, Business Development</p> | <p>-Market to targeted business owners about conversions</p> <p>-Create Database of local POC-owned small businesses and co-ops</p> <p>-Begin Exploring Co-op Hub or Co-op City as a place-based strategy for growing awareness of co-ops (NWC?)</p> <p>-Identify or create asynchronous educational/marketing materials (i.e. videos, social media, web courses, etc.)</p> <p>-Develop and track evaluation metrics</p> | <p>-Identify and secure location of Co-op Hub/ City</p> <p>-Continue to curate database of local POC-owned small businesses and co-ops</p> <p>-Plan for co-op ad campaign</p> <p>-Implement co-op ad campaign</p> <p>-Continue to track metrics</p> <p>-Evaluate results and pivot as needed</p> | <p>-Identify partnerships for City Conference</p> <p>-Facilitate and implement a planning process for Co-op Conference (Expo)</p> <p>-Market Denver as the national hub for cooperatives or best place to start a co-op</p> <p>-Continue to track metrics</p> <p>-Evaluate results and pivot as needed</p> | | <p>-Market Denver as the national hub for cooperatives or best place to start a co-op</p> <p>-Organize and Implement Co-op Conference (Expo)</p> <p>-Continue to track metrics</p> <p>-Evaluate results and pivot as needed</p> |

CO-OP DEVELOPER CULTIVATION

Purpose: To popularize the cooperative development process to meet the growing demand for cooperative development and conversion services.

| City's Role/Actions | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 3 | Phase 4 | Phase 5 |
|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| <p>-Promote training opportunity through City channels</p> <p>-Create grant opportunities for apprentices to be paid for their time in supporting startups and conversions</p> <p>-Utilize a City evaluator or hire a consultant to develop high level KPIs.</p> <p>-Create additional funding for organizations to hire cooperative developers</p> <p>-Provide funding for organizing Solidarity Circles & Training</p> <p>Partners: Denver Public Library, Marketing & Communications, NEST</p> | <p>-Plan and implement a Spanish & English language Train the Trainer Series</p> <p>-Develop an apprenticeship for trainees to support the co-op development process while continuing to learn (supporting with 25% of the work)</p> <p>-Train SBDCs and other business support organizations on Co-op model to increase their support</p> <p>-Identify and implement asynchronous learning opportunities for trainers</p> | <p>-Host quarterly continuing education workshops for trainees</p> <p>-Implement 1st Co-op Conversion Specialist Training and apprenticeships</p> <p>-Implement an apprenticeship for trainees to support the co-op development process while continuing to learn (supporting with 50% of the work)</p> <p>-Trainers lead Solidarity Circles</p> <p>-Provide scholarships for national training opportunities (CooperationWorks!, DAWI, RoundSky Solutions, etc.)</p> | <p>-Host quarterly continuing education workshops for trainees</p> <p>-Provide opportunities for Co-op Developers from Phase 1-2 to support capacity of co-op development process, supporting with 80% of the work</p> <p>-Implement New Train the Trainer Series in Spanish & English</p> <p>-Implement an apprenticeship for Phase 3 trainees to support the co-op development process while continuing to learn (supporting with 25% of the work)</p> | <p>-Host quarterly continuing education workshops for trainees</p> <p>-Implement the 2nd Co-op Conversion Specialist Training and apprenticeships</p> <p>-Implement an apprenticeship for Phase 3 trainees to support the co-op development process taking ownership of over 50% or more of the process</p> <p>-Trainers lead Solidarity Circles</p> | <p>-Host quarterly continuing education workshops for trainees</p> <p>-Provide opportunities for Co-op Developers from Phase 3-4 to support capacity of co-op development process, supporting with 80% of the work</p> |

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 |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop a grant program to support co-op development -Incorporate co-op resources into City programming (i.e., Commons on Champa) -Develop a grant program to offset startup costs (similar to the Organized Business Support Fund) | Incubation | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Plan and implement a co-op business incubator for 1-2 cooperatives -Evaluate first incubator and adapt curriculum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Implement a co-op business incubator for 2-3 cooperatives -Evaluate incubator and adapt as needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Implement two co-op business incubators for 3-4 cooperatives -Evaluate and adapt as needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Implement two co-op business incubators for 4-5 cooperatives -Evaluate and adapt as needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Implement two co-op business incubators for 6-8 cooperatives -Evaluate and adapt as needed |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create grant program to fund new organizations adding a cooperative startup program <p>Partners: Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Business Development, DSBO, City Council, NEST</p> | Bootcamp | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Customize curriculum for bootcamp -Pilot first bootcamp with 2 cooperatives (CCWB) -Evaluate bootcamp curriculum and adapt as needed -Identify bootcamp partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Implement 2 bootcamps -Recruit one partner organization to work with cooperatives -Share curriculum with partner organizations -Support partners as they adapt their curriculum for cooperatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Implement 3 bootcamps with 4-6 cooperatives by CCWB along with 3 partner organizations -Support partner organizations and troubleshoot as needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Phase out CCWB bootcamp -Work with partner organizations to implement 3 bootcamps for 6-8 cooperatives each -Coach partner organizations as needed -Develop additional materials for organizations as needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Work with partner organizations to implement 4 bootcamps with 6-10 cooperatives each -Coach partner organizations as needed -Develop additional materials as needed |

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.

Works Cited

- Denver Health. "Anchor Institution," n.d. <https://www.denverhealth.org/about-denver-health/anchor-institution>.
- Anderson, Emily, and Tom Pierson. "Cooperatives in Minneapolis: An Inventory and Assessment." Minneapolis Cooperative Technical Assistance Program, April 2016.
- Barry, Kevin. "Evergreen Cooperatives Helps Companies Shift to Co-Ops, Share Profits with Workers | Evergreen Cooperatives," August 11, 2021. <http://www.evgo.com/2021/08/11/evergreen-cooperatives-helps-companies-shift-to-co-ops-share-profits-with-workers/>.
- "Berkeley Policy Summary." Sustainable Economies Law Center, September 15, 2017. https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B1VPWTZ0vw6MSWxuZIEtOXRIQU0/view?resourcekey=0-9JHykPsJaXXeFpoirqJS8g&usp=embed_facebook.
- Bonilla, Daniel. Interview on Minneapolis CTAP Program. Zoom, November 2, 2021.
- Burdín, Gabriel and Andrés Dean. "Revisiting the Objectives of Worker-Managed Firms: An Empirical Assessment." *Economic Systems* 36, no. 1 (2012): 158–71.
- Burdín, Gabriel, and Andrés Dean. "New Evidence on Wages and Employment in Worker Cooperatives Compared with Capitalist Firms." *Journal of Comparative Economics* 37, no. 4 (December 1, 2009): 517–33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2009.08.001>.
- Camou, Michelle. "Cities Developing Worker Co-Ops: Efforts in Ten Cities," 2016, 38.
- Caselli, Guido, Michele Costa, and Flavio Delbono. "What Do Cooperative Firms Maximize, If at All? Evidence from Emilia-Romagna in the Pre-Covid Decade." *Department of Economics, University of Bologna*, February 2021. : <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3783005>.
- Craig, Ben, and John Pencavel. "Participation and Productivity: A Comparison of Worker Cooperatives and Conventional Firms in the Plywood Industry." *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* 26, no. 1995 Microeconomics (n.d.): 121–74.
- . "The Behavior of Worker Cooperatives: The Plywood Companies of the Pacific Northwest." *American Economic Review* 82, no. 5 (1992): 1083–1105.
- Dubb, Steve. "Building a Worker Co-Op Ecosystem: Lessons from the Big Apple." *Non Profit News | Nonprofit Quarterly*, February 5, 2020. <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/building-a-worker-co-op-ecosystem-lessons-from-the-big-apple/>.
- Eskandari, Yassi. Interview on Bay Area Cooperative Policy, November 2, 2021.
- Flecha, Ramon, and Ignacio Santa Cruz. "Cooperation for Economic Success: The Mondragon Case." *Analyse & Kritik* 33, no. 1 (May 1, 2011): 157–70. <https://doi.org/10.1515/auk-2011-0113>.
- Iyengar, Nikishka, Avery Ebron and Lyneir Richardson. "Building Community Wealth: Shifting Power and Capital in Real Estate Finance," *Inclusive Capital Collective*. 12 May 2021. Accessed 21 December 2021 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vGL6pHQ08GE8OAMk9tv8ErrffOipgmJC/view>
- Statistical Atlas. "Household Income in Denver, Colorado," 2019. <https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Colorado/Denver/Household-Income>.
- Kahn, Karen. "Evergreen Cooperatives Adapt and Grow." Fifty by Fifty, March 31, 2021. <https://www.fiftybyfifty.org/2021/03/evergreen-cooperatives-adapt-and-grow/>.
- Kerr, Camille. "Local Government Support for Cooperatives." Democracy at Work Institute, 2015. http://www.mcdcmadison.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Local_Govt_Support.pdf.
- "Madison Coalition Begins Cooperative Enterprise for Job Creation and Business Development Program – CALS News." Accessed September 15, 2021. <https://news.cals.wisc.edu/2016/10/31/madison-coalition-begins-cooperative-enterprise-development-program/>.
- "MCDC Fall 2019 Brochure." *Madison Cooperative Development Coalition* 52, no. 4 (December 6, 2016): 308–22. <https://doi.org/10.13109/grup.2016.52.4.308>.

- Minneapolis, City of. "Co-Operative Technical Assistance Program (C-TAP) Landing Page." Accessed September 15, 2021. <https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/programs-initiatives/b-tap/c-tap/>.
- Navarra, Cecilia. "Employment Stabilization Inside Firms: An Empirical Investigation of Worker Cooperatives." *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics* 87, no. 4 (January 11, 2016): 563–85.
- Nichols, Tracey. Interview on City Involvement in the Evergreen Cooperatives, December 6, 2021. Owner to Owners 4/21. "Owner to Owners | Business Transition Hotline." Accessed September 14, 2021. <https://www.owner2owners.nyc>.
- Palmer, Tim. "2019 Worker Cooperative Economic Census." Democracy at Work Institute, 2020.
- Patrick, Emily. Interview on Boston Cooperative Policies, October 1, 2021.
- Rubino, Joe. "Denver No. 2 for Gentrification in Recent Years, National Study Finds," July 8, 2020. <https://www.denverpost.com/2020/07/08/denver-gentrification-san-francisco/>.
- Schatz, Wayne. "Five Critical Things Every Co-Operative Leader Should Know." *International Journal of Co-operative Accounting and Management* 2, no. 1 (2019).
- Schmidt, Charity. Interview on Madison, WS Cooperative Policies. Zoom, October 7, 2021.
- Shatan, Nicholas and Olivia R. Williams. "A Guide to Transformative Land Strategies: Lessons from the Field." MIT CO-LAB. June 2020. Accessed 21 December 2021. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59e749467131a5e036c15d82/t/5f06708154b02120ab-2c8ef0/1594257540711/Community+Land+Trusts_CoLab.pdf
- Syal, Saduf. Interview on State of Cooperative Policy in New York City. Zoom, October 5, 2021.
- NCBA CLUSA. "The 7 Cooperative Principles," n.d. <https://ncbaclusa.coop/resources/7-cooperative-principles/>.
- Washington, Cambell, and Gibson Mcelhaney. Oakland Resolution Supporting the Development of Worker Cooperatives (2015). https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/theselc/pages/687/attachments/original/1484873744/Oakland_Resolution_Supporting_the_Development_of_Worker_Cooperatives_9_8_15.pdf?1484873744.
- NYC Business. "Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative - NYC Business." Accessed September 14, 2021. <https://www1.nyc.gov/nycbusiness/article/worker-cooperatives>.
- "Working Together: A Report on the First Year of the Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative." NYC: NYC Small Business Services, 2015.
- "Working Together: A Report on the Sixth Year of the Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative." NYC: NYC Small Business Services, 2020.