



Would you like to learn more about cooperatives?

This brief guide is designed for young people to learn more about cooperatives and resources for further education and employment (including internship opportunities).

Whatever your interest(s) may be there is a high likelihood that there is already a co-op that is doing it. In the rare case where one may not exist new co-ops are constantly being formed.

Interested in healthcare? There are co-ops here.

Interested in a legal career? There is a great need for lawyers who understand and promote co-ops.

Interested in farming? Some of the earliest and best known co-ops are in agriculture.

Interested in telecommunications? There are over 300 telecom co-ops USA helping to deliver broadband.

Interested in technology? There are all sorts of co-ops in this area.

Interested in electric utilities? Of course you are that is why you are here!

Bottom-line if you can imagine it can be done as a co-op.

Well you get the idea and during the session in addition to exploring the history of co-ops we will spend some time exploring the future and your role in it. So take a few minutes to review this guide click on the links and be prepared to discover a world of cooperation. Come to the session with your thoughts, ideas, questions, and dreams for how cooperatives can impact you and your community.

Resources

Co-op Organizations (outside the Electric co-op network)

Cooperatives provide a proven business model that has fostered economic progress in Iowa for decades. The [Iowa Institute for Cooperatives](#) (IIC) has been lighting the way for cooperatives across the state since 1951.

Our members come from a variety of industries, including agriculture, credit unions, rural electric, rural telephone, farm credit, petroleum, and more. We develop educational and training programs for our members, provide timely news updates, and guide legislative actions that build upon the strength of the cooperative system. We also promote new cooperative development and value-added production.

The [National Cooperative Business Association](#) is the nation's oldest and leading national cross sector membership association, representing cooperatives of all types and in all industries. NCBA offers a variety of programs and services to help co-ops strengthen their businesses and connect you to other co-ops so they can better serve their members and transform the global economy. NCBA also provides a strong, unified voice on Capitol Hill, and diligently works with lawmakers to enact cooperative-friendly legislation. They also have a large program to help developing countries start co-ops.

The [International Cooperative Alliance](#) helps individuals, government authorities and regional and international institutions understand the co-operative model of enterprise. It channels specific information to institutions and the media showing the importance of co-operatives to a wide range of economic and social issues.

The [Cooperative Trust](#) is a grassroots group of young people working in credit unions and other cooperatives. Founded in 2010, they connect and enable those fighting for the future of socially-responsible finance. The goal is simple. While they can't predict the future of business, credit unions, or cooperatives, they want to help build it by learning from industry leaders. The Trust seeks to build things, grow and help solve problems. They want to learn from the vast amount of talent among industry veterans while aggressively shaping the future.

The mission of the [Overseas Cooperative Development Council](#) is to champion, advocate and promote effective international cooperative development.

[The United States Federation of Worker Cooperatives \(USFWC\)](#) is the national grassroots membership organization for worker cooperatives. Our mission is to build a thriving cooperative movement of stable, empowering jobs through worker-ownership. They advance worker-owned, -managed, and -governed workplaces through cooperative education, advocacy and development.

[The National Council of Farmer Cooperatives \(NCFC\)](#) has been the voice of America's farmer cooperatives. Our members are regional and national farmer cooperatives, which in turn consist of nearly 2,500 local farmer cooperatives across the country. The majority of America's 2 million farmers and ranchers belong to one or more farmer cooperatives. NCFC members also include 18 state and regional councils of cooperatives.

[The National Association of Housing Cooperatives \(NAHC\)](#) represents housing cooperatives, mutual housing associations, other resident-owned or controlled housing as well as professionals, organizations and individuals who work with and advocate for housing cooperatives. Housing cooperatives offer millions of families who live in them several benefits such as: a collective and democratic ownership structure, limited liability, and lower costs.

Ideas

Outreach with your co-op and school:

- If your co-op has a member advisory committee ask to be a part of it
- Inquire to see if your co-op is interested in setting up a junior board of directors. For more information on how to do that see what [Carroll White Electric Co-op](#) in Indiana has done
- Encourage other co-ops in your area to set up informational displays at your high school career fair.
- Share ideas you learn this week to help ensure your co-op is actively reaching out to young people so that they understand the cooperative advantage.
- If you are into social media make sure you follow your co-op and others and actively participate

Big Vision:

Check out this article about how a community owned grocery store (just like your community owned electric co-op), [Brattleboro food co-op](#) transformed their vision from focusing just on the store to the community as a whole.

Individual:

If you believe that we need to grow the cooperative economy what actions are you willing to take (or encourage others to take) to make that happen?

- 1) Do you have a bank account? Is it with a large national bank? A community bank or a credit union? Credit unions are just like electric co-ops they are cooperative financial institutions that are owned by their members.
- 2) Tell your parents that you will do the next grocery shop for the family and then buy as many co-op products as possible whether it is cheese, juice, coffee, gifts or anything else you need. Then educate your parents about all the different types of co-ops.
- 3) If buying a product that comes from outside the USA, look for Fair Trade certified products as they are most often sourced from cooperatives in developing nations. See logos below.



- 4) Read a book or several books about co-ops. In a book club? Suggest your group read a book about co-ops and then discuss how to create a more cooperative economy. Please see the book list below.

Book List

"Humanizing the Economy" by John Restakis

This book focuses on different types of co-ops from around the world and the solution cooperatives offer to help resurrect the economy.

"Power Plays" by Ted Case

Tells the compelling story of how electric co-ops interacted with U.S. Presidents since FDR and offers compelling evidence about the importance of recommitting to working with the government at the highest levels.

"Everything for Everyone" by Nathan Schneider

If you are interested in learning how cooperative can help reshape the economy so that it works for all of us this is the book that lays out that game plan.

"Global Cooperation" by J. Tom Webb

A real "how to" book to help co-ops grow and have a much greater positive impact on the world economy and all the people that live on this planet.

"Local Dollars, Local Sense" by Michael Shuman

This book has a chapter dedicated to cooperatives and the renewed interest many people have in shopping, investing and getting financial services from their community.

"Locavesting" by Amy Cortese

This book also has a chapter dedicated to cooperatives and also showcases the benefits of investing in and patronizing locally owned businesses.

"The Cooperative Solution" by E.G. Nadeau

This short easy to read book outlines how cooperatives offer a very real and practical solution to the economic and social challenges we face and how we can create a more cooperative economy.

"Weavers of Dreams" by David Thompson

A special book recounts the history of the modern cooperative movement dating back to the Rochdale pioneers of 1844.

"Screw Business As Usual" by Richard Branson

Billionaire Branson (owner of Virgin Atlantic airlines among many other things) tells us why the current business model must change and mentions co-ops throughout the book.

Websites

List of the top [100 Co-ops in the U.S.](#) This is a great resource for jobs and internships!

List of the top [300 cooperatives](#) in the world,

A new [co-op story](#) is featured almost every day and is searchable by country or sector.

While the International Year of Cooperatives was in 2012 as declared by the United Nations. The [official UN website](#) continues to have very valuable information which discusses the impact of co-ops around the world.

Videos

A compilation of short videos with ideas on how to improve the co-op economy.

<http://www.youtube.com/user/Adamcooperative?feature=mhee>



7 Cooperative Principles

Cooperatives around the world operate according to the same core principles and values, adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance. Cooperatives trace the roots of these principles to the first modern cooperative founded in Rochdale, England in 1844.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people able to use its services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2. Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members—those who buy the goods or use the services of the cooperative—who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

3. Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. This benefits members in proportion to the business they conduct with the cooperative rather than on the capital invested.

4. Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it is done so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintains the cooperative's autonomy.

5. Education, Training and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. Members also inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives.

6. Cooperation among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7. Concern for Community

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of communities through policies and programs accepted by the members.

Values

In addition to the principles cooperatives are based on the values of:

- 1) Self-help
- 2) Self-responsibility
- 3) Democracy
- 4) Equality
- 5) Equity
- 6) Solidarity
- 7) Honesty
- 8) Openness
- 9) Social responsibility
- 10) Caring for others

Cool Co-ops and Partnerships



Cabot Creamery Cooperative

The farmers of [Cabot co-op](#) have long been believers in the seven cooperative principles especially the 6th principle of cooperation among cooperatives. Cabot is pleased to provide complimentary cheese for just about any co-op event, but it is about more than just the cheese. Through a series of events Cabot leverages a modest marketing budget to create WOM (word of mouth) buzz. The website has loads of information including a scout patch program that is open to all.



Equal Exchange

A worker owned cooperative that is known for sourcing its coffee, tea, and chocolate, from farmer cooperatives in developing countries and for providing them a Fair Trade price, and a stable partnership so as to strengthen their communities. By serving co-op products in your lobby you reinforce that you are a values driven business. Equal Exchange participated in the Cabot Community Tour with credit unions. Please visit www.equalexchange.coop

Valley Co-operative Business Association

Leaders from across [co-op sectors](#) in New England coming together to share a vision of a cooperative future, this is the power of collaboration. Jon Reske, Vice President, Marketing at UMass Five College Federal Credit Union, worked closely with representatives from Franklin Community Co-op, the Neighboring Food Co-op Association and the Valley Alliance of Worker Co-ops to form the Valley Co-operative Business Association. The name is a deliberate reference to the National Cooperative Business Association and this regional group represents a first step in encouraging co-ops to work together locally to raise the profile of co-operative enterprise, engage policy makers and support shared business success.

Flint Energies and Robins Federal Credit Union



Flint Energies an electric cooperative in suburban Atlanta has teamed up with Robins Federal Credit Union to offer low rate loans for a wide variety of energy improvements. Designed with the member in mind it will ultimately reduce utility bills and energy use to also have a positive impact on the environment.

More questions or ideas?

Please feel free to be in touch with me.

Adam Schwartz

Founder & Member Owner Columinate

The Cooperative Way

(703) 608-0534 (Call or Text)

aschwartz@thecooperativeway.coop



@Adamcooperative

www.thecooperativeway.coop

www.columinate.coop