

# CO-OP CONNECTIONS



A PUBLICATION OF THE CALIFORNIA CENTER FOR COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

ANNUAL EDITION 2016/17

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## MISSION STATEMENT

*The mission of the California Center for Cooperative Development is to promote cooperatives as a vibrant business model to address the economic and social needs of California's communities.*



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An equal opportunity provider and employer.

## WORKER COOPERATIVES PROMOTE ECONOMIC EQUALITY

Fall, 2016 marks the opening of one of CCCD's worker co-op development projects to create jobs and cooperative ownership opportunities for underserved residents in Yolo County, California. Yolo Eco-Clean Cooperative, a green cleaning business that provides residential and commercial cleaning services in Yolo County builds on our prior projects using the "Build and Recruit" model of cooperative development. In this model, pre-development and early launch decisions are made by a steering committee and a temporary board composed of community members who volunteer their time to the initiative and shepherd the business while initial member candidates go through the membership process.

Before submitting an application to work with the co-op, prospective members must complete four workshops that focus on worker cooperatives:

- 1) Co-ops 101; 2) Governance and Decision Making; 3) Understanding Finances; and 4) Bylaws of Yolo Eco-Clean Cooperative (YECC - Pronounced "yes").
- Classes are conducted in Spanish and English. Member candidates must work for the cooperative for six months before they are eligible for membership.



*Prospective members learn how to read and understand financial statements from Josie Enriquez of Empower Yolo and Kim Coontz of CCCD*

The benefits of working at YECC are multifaceted. Wages alone are better than comparable jobs, and members also share in the profits. But there are other benefits as well. Workers are engaged in deciding their work schedule, how work is organized, and involved in all aspects of decision making. They have opportunities to try on "new hats" as they engage in business strategy, public relations, accounting, marketing, and leadership. Empowerment

*(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)*

## FARMWORKER HOUSING COOPERATIVES IN CALIFORNIA



*Directors of 4 cooperatives touring Cooperativa Santa Elena*

In the mid and late 1970's, the United Farm Workers (UFW) led strikes throughout the nation for better pay and working conditions. Many people remember the

legacy of the grape boycott, but fewer remember that there was also a housing cooperative movement developing in parallel to the strikes. In the Salinas Valley of Monterey County, union members fought for affordable housing, and in the process created several housing cooperatives. San Jerardo, La Buena Esperanza (Good Hope), and Santa Elena cooperatives were the first of these, and several others in Salinas and Watsonville followed.

These co-ops each have unique facets that embody strong principles of cooperativism and self-determination. At Santa Elena, a 100 member mobile home cooperative, their manager is a direct employee, and require that the manager be a member. Members also created a college scholarship fund and a funeral fund to help members in need. At San Jerardo Cooperative, an 80 member cooperative created from abandoned military barracks, members provide much of the work required for

*(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)*

## EVENTS

### AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVES LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

JANUARY 26 - 27, 2017  
SACRAMENTO, CA

Program features full day seminars on agricultural marketing, cooperative finance, and case studies in cooperative success, failure, and transformations.

### CALIFORNIA CO-OP CONFERENCE

APRIL 28 - 29, 2017  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Multi-sector co-op event serves diverse interests through concurrent workshops for the co-op novice to the co-op expert. Includes workshops for consumer and worker co-ops on a range of important issues, courses on starting a co-op, and on using the co-op model for community and economic development.

### CO-OP TOUR

April 30, 2017  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Supplements the Co-op Conference by offering a day touring co-ops in San Francisco.

### CO-OP DAY AT THE CAPITOL

TBD, 2017  
SACRAMENTO, CA

Cooperatives and cooperative supporters come together to educate legislators and the public about the cooperative business model.



(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

and social capital are natural outcomes of worker cooperatives, and the tangible personal and societal benefits include skill development, job satisfaction, increased civic engagement and even increased happiness.<sup>1</sup>

CCCD's development of Yolo Eco-Clean Cooperative is part of a larger network of cooperative development initiatives across the nation that are formed to help address income inequality in the United States.<sup>2</sup> The staggering gaps between the "haves" and "have nots" are well documented and concerning. Because inequality is even more pronounced for racial and ethnic minorities, many of these cooperative initiatives, including CCCD's, are extending outreach to these underserved groups.<sup>3</sup>

According to the Bureau of Labor statistics, growing inequality in the United States has been accompanied by increasing labor productivity.<sup>4</sup> While productivity has fueled escalating profits, the reality is that the workers engaged in this productivity are not experiencing its financial benefits. Worker cooperatives are structured to direct all financial gains of the enterprise to the benefit of their worker members, enabling them to increase their earning potential and to be the direct beneficiaries of increased labor productivity. Interestingly, a recent study found that worker cooperatives are even more productive than traditional workplaces.<sup>5</sup>

Engaged in helping to realize the ambitious goal established by the International Cooperative Alliance to make cooperatives the fastest growing business model, cooperative development non-profits across the United States are launching innovative initiatives to promote cooperative expansion. For example, in New York City, cooperative developers used a combination of foundation funds and \$1.2 million in City funds to create 21 new worker cooperatives in 11 different industries, with more than 140 worker owners.<sup>6</sup> The city of Cleveland, Ohio joined with regional foundations to fund the development of Evergreen Cooperatives, a network of 3 cooperatives that employs 90 people. Madison, Wisconsin has committed \$1 million each year over the next five years to cooperative development. A resolution passed in February in Berkeley, CA directs the development of an initiative to support worker cooperatives, and Oakland, CA also has a bill slated for a 2017 council vote.

California's Bay Area has long been a bastion of worker cooperatives, with the densest geographic concentration of worker cooperatives in the nation. It is not surprising that it is also home for the US Federation of Worker Cooperatives, as well as an impressive network of other support organizations and initiatives including the Sustainable Economies Law Center, and Project Equity.

A common theme among the initiatives across the nation is a recognized commitment among cooperative



Yolo Eco-Clean Co-op Members (and fan) table at 2016 Co-op Month celebration at the Davis Farmer's Market

development non-profits to share information, encourage best practices, and to cooperate to ensure the integrity of cooperative development. This helps assure that the cooperatives developed have a solid foundation of the fundamental principles that promote success.

Member candidates at Yolo Eco-Clean Cooperative are excited about the opportunities that cooperative ownership promises. "I enjoy working with the other women to create a business that we all own," says candidate Janeth Naranjo. Indeed, working together in a cooperative enterprise is a solid path to promote increased equality.

- E. Kim Coontz

1. This "Spillover Effect" is widely recognized in literature. See for example Domain Satisfaction as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Work-Family Spillover and Subjective Well-Being: A Longitudinal Study. Cho, E. & Tay, L. in *Journal of Business & Psychology* (2016) 31: 445.

2. Statistics of Income Division, Research, Analysis and Statistics, Internal Revenue Service, Table 1, December 2015 Striking it Richer: The Evolution of Top Incomes in the United States, Emmanuel Saez, June 2015 Economic Policy Institute analysis of Kopczuk, Saez and Song (2010) and Social Security Administration wage statistics, November 2015.

3. Pew Research Center, December 12, 2014: Wealth inequality has widened along racial, ethnic lines since end of Great Recession By Rakesh Kochhar and Richard Fry, Institute for Policy Studies, Billionaire Bonanza: The Forbes 400 and the Rest of Us, December 2015.

4. Bureau of Labor Statistics: May 2014 | Vol. 3 / No. 12 What can labor productivity tell us about the U.S. economy? By Shawn Sprague *The Atlantic*, February, 2015, Gillian White: Why the Gap Between Worker Pay and Productivity Is So Problematic.

5. What Do We Really Know about Worker Co-operatives? Co-operatives UK, Pérotin, V., 2016, p.18.

6. Fiscal Year 2015, Mayors Office Of Contract Services NYC Small Business Services: Working Together: A Report on the First Year of the Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative (WCBDI).

# COOPERATIVES ROCK!

PUZZLE ANSWERS DRAW FROM ARTICLES & YOUR OWN CO-OP KNOWLEDGE!

## STAFF

1. Many people remember the legacy of the grape \_\_\_\_\_ (**yctboto**), but fewer remember that there was also a housing cooperative movement developing in parallel to the strikes that still benefit farm worker families today. BONUS: Page Number \_\_\_\_
2. In August, 2016, CCCD organized a "Housing Cooperative \_\_\_\_\_ (**grnceocenv**)" that brought together directors and committee members from the three farmworker housing cooperatives to promote peer-to-peer education. BONUS: Page Number \_\_\_\_
3. Beginning farmers are emerging from farming \_\_\_\_\_ (**scptpnripeahie**) programs, food advocacy organizing groups, farmer social networking efforts, and other settings where they bonded with others over the importance of farming. BONUS: Page Number \_\_\_\_
4. As member-owned and \_\_\_\_\_ (**aeaytrcloicdlam**) controlled entities, cooperatives offer a structure for people to accomplish together what they may not be able to do on their own. BONUS: Page Number \_\_\_\_
5. Engaged in helping to realize the \_\_\_\_\_ (**btaimisuo**) goal established by the International Cooperative Alliance to make cooperatives the fastest growing business model, cooperative development non-profits across the United States are launching innovative initiatives to promote cooperative expansion. BONUS: Page Number \_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_ (**wtnoeremepm**) and social capital are natural outcomes of worker cooperatives, and the tangible personal and societal benefits include skill development, job satisfaction, increased civic engagement and even increased happiness. BONUS: Page Number \_\_\_\_
7. While CCCD is the principle organizer of this conference, the broad California community of cooperatives and cooperative \_\_\_\_\_ (**vrdeoeslep**) can be seen at this annual event. BONUS: Page Number \_\_\_\_

Send a photo of your answers with bonus questions for a special shoutout by May 30th to [kkhogiani@cccd.coop](mailto:kkhogiani@cccd.coop)!

1. Boycott; 2. Convergence; 3. Apprenticeship; 4. Democratically; 5. Ambitious; 6. Empowerment; 7. Developers

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*CCCD has an ongoing student intern program. Interns enrich CCCD's programs with their vital contributions while learning about cooperatives.*

## Why Wait? Become a CCCD Member or Renew TODAY!!

CCCD is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that is supported by memberships, donations, and project-related grants. **Our goal is to have every cooperative and cooperative supporter in California be a member of CCCD.**

### Why should you/your cooperative be a member of CCCD?

- 1) CCCD is California's only non-profit dedicated to providing information and education about all different types of cooperatives;
- 2) As a non-profit, CCCD is an independent, non-political voice to explain how cooperative businesses are unique and why they need special legal, tax and other considerations;
- 3) Members receive discounts on CCCD education programs for cooperative boards and staff;
- 4) CCCD is uniquely positioned to bring together different types of cooperatives for their mutual benefit;
- 5) CCCD is connected nationally and within the state, which enables us to help members address specific issues by linking them to appropriate resources;
- 6) CCCD's role in developing cooperatives brings more visibility to cooperatives and increased recognition of the positive contributions they bring to the California economy;
- 7) Your membership will be listed on our website (unless you prefer otherwise).

(Please Check Member Level on Appropriate Line)

### CO-OP/ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP (Based on Annual Revenue)

_____ \$1 billion & above: \$750	_____ \$100 M - \$999 M: \$500	_____ \$3 M - \$99 M: \$350	_____ \$1 M - \$2,999,999: \$250
_____ \$700,000 - \$999,999: \$200	_____ \$400,000 - \$699,999: \$150	_____ \$200,000 - \$399,999: \$100	_____ Less than \$200,000: \$50

### SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP (co-op organizational or individual)

_____ Cooperative Champion: \$5,000	_____ Cooperative Leader: \$3,000	_____ Cooperative Innovator: \$1,000
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INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIPS: \_\_\_\_\_ \$50-\$200 (self-assessed ability to contribute) \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 Individual Low Income/Student

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Co-op/Org: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed Please Find \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form via mail: CCCD; 979 F St. Suite A-1; Davis, CA 95616; fax: 530-297-1033; or email: [coops@cccd.coop](mailto:coops@cccd.coop). Please make checks out to CCCD. Credit card payments are accepted on our website at [www.cccd.coop/membership](http://www.cccd.coop/membership). CCCD is a charitable non-profit; member subscriptions are tax deductible donations.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

# FARMWORKER HOUSING COOPERATIVES IN CALIFORNIA (CONT'D)

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

maintenance as well as some large scale projects. They are even developing their own wastewater treatment plant.

These co-ops managed to create affordable housing and special programs with little outside support. CCCD reached out to these co-ops in 2014 to learn how they prepare members for roles as directors. They shared that they have had few opportunities to learn, and the last time they received any type of leadership training was more than 15 years ago. In 2015, we began a program working with the three cooperatives to support a new generation of cooperative leaders with trainings for directors, education for members, and other technical assistance to benefit the cooperatives. It has been a great year of mutual learning for CCCD and the cooperatives!

In August, 2016, CCCD organized a "Housing Cooperative Convergence" that brought together directors and committee members from the three farmworker housing cooperatives to promote peer-to-peer education. They shared stories, strategies and ideas for improving operations, governance, and finances. The event formed relationships that attendees plan to maintain in the future.

In addition to the education, CCCD also found additional ways to support these cooperatives. At Buena Esperanza, we carried out a project to reinstate a USDA rental assistance program. To be a member of Buena Esperanza, families must show that at least one person is employed in agricultural labor. As one would expect, this means that families have lower than average incomes. The 'rental assistance' program covers a portion of some members' monthly assessment. The frustrating thing is that they paid off their mortgage in 2014, and discovered afterwards that the antiquated computer software that USDA uses tied rental assistance to the mortgage payments, and the cooperative could not receive rental assistance without making mortgage payments. Working with CCCD staff Luis Sierra, the directors, their management company, and a local USDA representative



*Cooperative directors tour Cooperativa Santa Elena, a cooperatively owned manufactured home park with 100 members*

developed a plan to reinstate the rental assistance program and make the issue a priority at the USDA's national office. The directors and members agreed to have Luis interview members about the impact that the loss of rental assistance had on their daily lives. CCCD gathered the testimonies confidentially and wrote a report summarizing the impacts on members. We were happy to receive word from USDA-Rural Development in November that they have re-activated Buena Esperanza's account and will be able to reinstate rental assistance in early 2017.

This has been an exciting year working with these already-strong cooperatives. CCCD is continuing the education program for directors and members in 2017. In addition we are including an energy assessment with UC Davis to identify major sources of energy use within households and common areas and then propose methods of reducing those costs, including solar panel installation.

*- Luis Sierra*

## MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN ABOUT CO-OPS

Few resources exist to help the public understand cooperatives, and even fewer for seasoned co-op members hoping to learn from peers. Thanks to the California Cooperative Conference and The Art and Science of Cooperative Development, the public, co-op members, community advocates, and co-op developers can learn everything from the basics to the detailed legalistic and interpersonal elements of operating cooperative businesses.

### **California Cooperative Conference**

The California Center for Cooperative Development (CCCD) hosts the California Cooperative Conference (CCC) each year, attracting co-ops from across the West Coast. Workshops cover several topics such as starting a cooperative, the new California worker co-op statute (AB 816), housing cooperatives, communication and group decision-making, food cooperatives, and more. While CCCD is the principle organizer of this conference, the broad California community of cooperatives and cooperative developers can be seen at this annual event. It is an important opportunity to meet and learn from nearly anyone and everyone involved with cooperatives in California.

CCC isn't only a time to learn, but also to celebrate, socialize, and visit cooperatives. The keynote speeches offer a deeper look into each other's stories and a chance to celebrate cooperative achievements. The popular Friday night social, which is open to the public, is a chance to expand on conversations initiated earlier in the day and to meet cooperators in a relaxed setting.

The last day of the Conference involves touring nearby cooperatives for an inside view. CCC will be held in San Francisco on April 28th - 29th, 2017. If you want a reminder, consider signing up for our email list at cccd.coop and receive early registration and volunteering information.

### **CooperationWorks!: The Art and Science of Cooperative Development**

After a two year hiatus, CooperationWorks! (CW!) and the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives restarted their cooperative developer training this year and will continue next year. The five-day intensive session is open to co-op developers and community organizers from across the U.S. for a chance to learn from cooperative experts, share with each other, and visit cooperative businesses. This rare opportunity to swap best practices not only expands toolsets for developers but also foments enthusiasm and plans for future collaboration.

Training topics cover fundamentals of a co-op business model, feasibility studies, tax codes, member investment, and equity. Knowledgeable presenters engage participants in discussions and group activities that enable problem solving of individual and common issues. Thanks to this training, a new cohort of developers and community organizers can improve their assistance to their co-op clients.

If you are interested in attending the next cooperative developer trainings, contact CooperationWorks! and consider becoming a member for additional resources on cooperative development. We hope to see you at next year's CCC and CW! trainings.

*- Mai Nguyen*

## TIM HUET PRESIDENT

Association of Arizmendi Cooperatives

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Past President:  
Davis Food Co-op & Yolo Mutual Housing Assoc.

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Housing Co-op Law  
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## RICARDO NUÑEZ

Cooperatives Program Director  
Director of Economic Democracy  
Sustainable Economies Law Center

With the average farmer's age at 59 and most farmers entering retirement, who will grow our food? Who will maintain the world's largest agricultural economy? There's a desperate need for young farmers in the US, but those raised on farms are not returning home and the many who are interested in starting a farm business face many hurdles: high cost of farmland, insufficient farming skills and experience, and business acumen.

Many seasoned farmers who have maintained or built a farm business don't want to see their life's work become paved over for development. Instead, they want the land to remain for farming. Some farmers created land trusts, lease-to-own agreements, and farming mentorship arrangements to ensure their farms will stay as such and, when possible, to assist new farmers learn the lay of the land. But, we need more of these farmers to pave the way for young and beginning farmers. Land access is one barrier for new farmers, along with financing, infrastructure, and labor.

Enter the worker co-op model. Worker owners can pool their money to finance the operation, bring together different skills and strengths, and include multiple perspectives in farm planning. While there's a long history of agricultural cooperatives, there aren't many models of worker cooperative farms. Now, that's changing.

Beginning farmers are emerging from farming apprenticeship programs, food advocacy groups, farmer social networking efforts, and other settings where they bonded with others over the importance of farming. They come from a background of working with others and making group decisions, which are essential to worker cooperatives.

Take the example of Solidarity Farm, started by Ellee Igoe and Hernan Cavasos. They had worked to build food justice in San Diego for several years. They were key organizers in changing zoning to allow for more community gardens, initiating one of the first farmers' market food stamp match programs, creating a farm incubator for resettled refugees, among many projects that have increased availability of fresh, local food to San Diegans.

In the city they addressed food justice from the consumer side, and now they're building it on the production side. Two years ago Igoe and Cavasos decided to look for a place to farm. They found a half-acre lease in Pauma Valley, an agricultural region of San Diego County where your avocado or orange likely came from. They started by providing an affordable CSA for urban dwellers. For \$32 a week, a customer gets 13 varieties of quality, fresh produce each week. Capturing the ethos of their service to low-income customers and dedication to fair labor, they called their operation Solidarity Farm.

From a half-acre in 2014 to 6 acres in 2016, and from 20 CSA members to 80, they have grown in gross revenue from \$3,000 a month in 2014 to \$12,000 per month in 2016. Solidarity Farm has been able to expand with the help of more hands, but in line with their beliefs they

want anyone working on the farm to have a say in their work and wages. They also see this as a way for farmers to access land that is otherwise cost prohibitive. These are reasons they wanted to form a cooperative.

They had mixed success in recruiting co-op members, but the ones who have stayed are perhaps predictably the friends who they already spent years with doing social justice organizing. Their long-time friend Steven Heslin is gifted with animals, so he came last year to tend to the growing herd of sheep, flock of chickens, and drove of goats. Ivette Vega helped start the farm and recently returned and is taking an active role in many facets of the operation, from seeding to marketing. "I get to help with everything, help each part flourish, and I never get bored. This is what I want to do for the foreseeable future," she says of her return to the farm. Working together, Igoe, Cavasos, Heslin, and Vega cover all the tasks necessary to run a dynamic farm business.

While some groups draw from old relationships, some are investing in new bonds. Six young farmers in Nevada City became friends over the years of farming in the same rural area. Their casual conversations exchanging dreams of running their own farms turned into the revelation of creating a farm together. As one of the members, Cody Curtis, said, "It simply makes sense to work together!"

They quickly became serious in this pursuit and met regularly to establish a mission, goal, decision-making protocol, and timeline. They attended CCCD's California Cooperative Conference, participated in Democracy at Work Institute webinars, and sought assistance from CCCD. We suggested that they familiarize themselves with AB 816, the new California worker co-op statutes, and they promptly began a reading group to dig through the legal framework and read sample incorporation documents created by the Sustainable Economies Law Center (SELC).

While this group shows much promise in their ability to cooperatively plan and work, they face the common issue among young farmers: land. They know many farmers in the area, but they have yet to find a place to call home. They're willing to move outside the area if it means they can fulfill their collective goal.

With assistance from a USDA Rural Cooperative Development grant, CCCD is helping to organize Solidarity Farm and the Nevada City farmers into worker cooperatives. Support ranges from cooperative development to business management, including legal, financial literacy, and interpersonal trainings that ensure a successful cooperative. In the case of Solidarity Farm, CCCD worked with them to draft their incorporation documents and they are getting ready to incorporate. CCCD is also developing models for young and beginning farmers to make farm ownership achievable.

A rising number of farmers request assistance from CCCD to explore worker cooperative farms. Please let us know if you are interested in transitioning your land into the hands of young and beginning farmers – the people integral to the maintenance of our agricultural economy, rural communities, and society.

- Mai Nguyen



# CO-OP CONNECTIONS

## COOPERATIVES - WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN!

A cooperative is an independent, self-help organization. As member-owned and democratically controlled entities, cooperatives offer a structure for people to accomplish together what they may not be able to do on their own.

Are you a farmer or an artisan who wants to focus on the work you feel passionate about, yet wants the benefit of selling more directly to consumers? Market the fruits of your labor together in a cooperative enterprise!

Do you have a consumer need? Maybe you want healthy food, locally sourced products, or to patronize a local store where you have a say in how it operates? Perhaps you are a parent who wants a preschool or child care program that allows you the opportunity to be closely engaged. Possibly you want to obtain a service that is difficult to obtain, or you want to retain a valued business that is not profitable enough for a proprietor, but is highly valued by its patrons. If any of these ring true, a consumer cooperative will do the trick.

Are you an entrepreneur who values work and desires worker freedom to organize and control the workplace? Maybe you own a company and want to retire, but you're worried about what will happen to the employees who have loyally worked to build your business? Try starting a worker cooperative!

Does a community that allows you some control over your neighborhood or neighbors, allows for an affordable homeownership option, and allows you the opportunity to design amenities that are important to you sound good? Then a housing cooperative is for you!



CCCD Staff & Intern (from left) Back row: Arielle Cababat, Tong Zheng, Jimin Kim, Amanda Knapp, Joseph Whitcomb, Kalim Khogiani-Nguyen, Luis Sierra; Front Row: Mary Nguyen, Yuma Sakakura, Mai Nguyen, E. Kim Coontz, Tiffany Yost, Fabiola Diaz (Not pictured: Angelica Medina)

Are you passionate about helping others? Cooperatives are a great tool for economic development because they empower people to change their own lives.

Meeting member needs is at the heart of cooperative enterprise. Cooperatives are people-powered initiatives that draw their strength from coming together to gain healthy food, a home, quality services, market prominence, or better prices - things that could not be gained individually.

CCCD is a reliable, experienced resource for all things co-op. Please become a member of CCCD today—let's work together to promote and support cooperatives!

E. Kim Coontz, Executive Director



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