



# COOPERATION *among* COOPERATIVES

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The Valley Alliance of Worker Cooperatives (VAWC) facilitates cooperation among its members throughout New England. Since the US currently lacks the legal and financial infrastructure to support worker co-ops, it is essential for cooperatives to collaborate with one another through institutions such as VAWC.

VAWC's Inter-Cooperative Development Fund embodies their commitment to building the larger co-operative economy. Each VAWC member co-op contributes 5% of their surplus into the fund which is then directed to support existing members, encourage new cooperative start-ups, and act as a collateral pool. The VAWC co-ops collectively own and control this fund - meaning it acts upon the collective will of members, where they may have less power to conduct larger change without utilizing their collective power. Just as worker-owned cooperatives promote collaboration and equality within individual firms, cooperation among cooperatives means redirecting financial resources from co-ops enjoying surplus towards co-ops of need.

## COLLECTIVE COPIES

Collective Copies is a cooperative print shop in Amherst, MA.

Collective Copies prioritizes ecological sustainability, reflected in their usage of only recycled paper.

Collective Copies also donates 10% of its surplus each year to community organizations.

## PEDAL PEOPLE

Pedal People is a Northampton-based hauling service that operates purely through non-gas-powered tools, primarily bicycles with trailers attached.

Pedal People aims to challenge our car-centric culture for the health of both people and the planet.

## OXBOW DESIGN BUILD

Oxbow is a full-service build and design co-op in Easthampton, MA, taking projects from conceptual stages through execution while prioritizing community and sustainability.

Oxbow strives to engage in cooperative development and housing justice projects.

## FLAT IRON CO-OP

The Flat Iron is a coffeehouse in Bellows Falls, VT, serving food and beverages while fostering community through their commitment to accessibility.

Fully owned and operated by women, the founders aim to create a community space for local community members to exchange ideas, play music, and hold informal gatherings.

## THE HIVE MAKERSPACE

The Hive Makerspace in Greenfield, MA, is a community workshop supporting entrepreneurship and the creative economy.

Any member can create their envisioned projects - from developing skills in their skillshares to crafting items in their many workshops.

## TAKEAWAYS

- I. Worker cooperatives prioritize social profitability over purely financial profits and have greater ability to act on these values due to their democratic structure.
- II. Cooperation among cooperatives is essential for the success of both individual worker cooperatives and the fostering of a larger solidarity economy ecosystem.
- III. Cooperative development organizations like VAWC can facilitate cooperation among cooperatives and connect individual co-ops with the larger ecosystem.