Cooperative Baltimore Academy

Course Syllabus

Our current market-driven economic structure has unsuccessfully distributed wealth across individuals in the United States. The social and solidarity economy (SSE), an alternative economy that focuses on cooperation, association and solidarity, has been increasingly looked at a way to promote more holistic development efforts. Cooperatives are one aspect of this SSE, along with movements and organizations that focus on ecological sustainability, democratic and non-extractive financing, collective land ownership, and more. Cooperatives, as just one tactic that contributes to a more just socioeconomic system, embody some of SSE’s most important features: democratic and participatory decision making, social cohesion and equality, while also helping individuals satisfy their needs, build resilience and expand their capabilities.

The Cooperative Baltimore Academy (CBA) is focus on racial equity. Our academy is committed on creating equity in Baltimore City low- and moderate-income communities of color and for promoting low to moderate income entrepreneurs of color. Priority will be given to businesses and organizations that are creating worker-owned job opportunities for, with or in communities of color. We want to see how our work can help economically empower communities of color by supporting cooperative members in their quest for fair wages and dignified employment through launching cooperative businesses. While we envision this task will not be easy and will required a deep commitment in time and resources, for incubating Black led cooperatives.

This academy course provides an in-depth overview of what the role of worker cooperative or how to start developing a coop business. We will cover the basics of worker cooperatives, their principles and history; we will learn how cooperatives fit in an overall strategy for socioeconomic justice; we will analyze the steps for creating a cooperative; and we will think critically about needs of the community and how the cooperative can meet them. Given that we envision a specific way of working with our Black worker cooperatives, we will also go over the basics of group work methodology, to give you a better understanding of what our model of incubation is grounded on.

The discussion and content of course reading will be used for training purposes. We will spend a great deal of time on these readings and you are responsible for being prepared for discussion.
Course Learning Goals:
By the end of this academy course, you should be able to…

- Define what is a cooperative
- Research and gather information on cooperative philosophy and principles
- Conduct a preliminary feasibility study
- Recruit and establish a membership structure
- Explore options for financing
- Prepare a business plan
- Coordinate publicity and public relations concerning the co-op
- Identify the connections between today’s controversies in public policy race relations, civil rights, and social justice;

Our learning environment will require full attention. Please place cell phones, PDAs, pagers, watches, etc., on the “off” or “silent/vibrate” setting upon entering the training room. You are not allowed to use iPod/iPhone/iPad or similar devices unless you are using such devices to take notes. Students using a laptop computer are expected to refrain from engaging in non-related activities including, but not limited to, surfing the internet, chatting, or other activities. Should you need to answer a call or page, quietly exit the room before you respond. If you need to exit often, sit towards the door. If you will need to frequently exit often to answer phone calls, please reconsider enrolling.

Academy Attendance

Attendance is required mandatory for academy participants. In the event you feel this commitment is beyond your ability, we ask that you “not” accept the placement slot. **No more than one absence allowed, without proper medical or employment documentation.** Participants are responsible for materials covered in lectures, guest lectures, extra class materials readings and visual presentations.

Communication Via Email Must Be Specific

When sending an email to me, please draft the subject line as follows:  Full Name, and your issue or question. For example, your subject line might read, “Fannie Lou Hamer Service Organization, Question about Paper” Below is an outline of the course: each session, its date, the purpose, recommended course readings. Please let us know if you have any questions. Connect with me at ronhantz@ndcnetwork.org and 410-961-8697 mobile.
Assignment Overview:

You will have several categories of assignments throughout this course:
- **Readings** are assigned that should be read in advance of the sessions.
- **Activities** are assigned where you will apply skills you have learned in the workshops.
- **Big Picture Questions** will help you start developing the vision and mission for the cooperative(s) you create. We recommend that you enhance your learning experience through consideration of big questions.
- All academy participants will complete a popular education-based Community Engagement Assignment geared toward building organizational and/or community investment and awareness. More information will be provided about this assignment. It will be due, along with a presentation on your business on April 4th.

Primary readings text: **In Good Company: The Guide To Cooperative Employee Ownership**

Course Outline:

### #1: The Role of the Cooperative Developer and Incubator  
**Date:** November 16, 2019 (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)  
**Session Description and Purpose:** The purpose of this session is to articulate why participants are becoming involved in cooperative development and get an overview of the various cooperative development models that are being utilized in the United States. In learning about the different models, participants will have the opportunity to analyze and reflect on which approach best fits their mission in Video Presentation: Food For Change 2013, Steven Alves, Director

### #2: What Is An Employee-Owned or Worker-Owned Co-op, In Good Company: The Guide To Cooperative Employee Ownership pages 8-10  
**Date:** January 11, 2020 (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)  
**Session Description and Purpose:** Session discuss key differences between a worker cooperative and conventional employee owned business.

### #3: When Does An Employee Co-Op Make Sense, In Good Company: The Guide To Cooperative Employee Ownership pages 11-12  
**Date:** January 18, 2020 (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)  
**Session Description and Purpose:** Session covers key characteristics of what cooperatives have in common.

### #4: Fundamental Elements Of An Employee Cooperative In Good Company: The Guide To Cooperative Employee Ownership pages 14-18  
**Date:** January 25, 2020 (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)  
**Session Description and Purpose:** Explores decision making of legal structure, governance and management
**Date:** February 1, 2020 (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)
**Session Description and Purpose:** Discuss the critical membership policies and how cooperative membership is acquired.

#6: Planning For Perpetuity, In Good Company: The Guide To Cooperative Employee Ownership pages 26-34
**Date:** February 8, 2020 (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)
**Session Description and Purpose:** Examines ownership in cooperative through equity purchase, transfer and valuation.

#7: Business Management, In Good Company: The Guide To Cooperative Employee Ownership pages 35-44
**Date:** February 23, 2020 (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)
**Session Description and Purpose:** Session explores fostering circulation of information within the cooperative. Ways to establish, support governance and management based on trust and mutual help. Ensuring that the cooperative best interest is also the best interest of its workers in order to induce participation. Cooperative management is not only beneficial from a human and social point of view but also a key asset for a cooperative.

#8: Board Orientation, In Good Company: The Guide To Cooperative Employee Ownership page 48
**Date:** February 29, 2020 (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)
**Session Description and Purpose:** This session will assist you in understanding how you can partner your leadership skills with your board member skills to develop a healthy cooperative community.

**Date:** March 7, 2020 (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)
**Session Description and Purpose:** This session explains the importance of business planning, defines and describes the components of a business plan.

#10: Constructing Your Business Financial Model: Revenue Streams and Cost Structure
**Date:** March 14, 2020 (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)
**Session Description and Purpose:** Develop a business plan with a defensible financial model that credibly values your cooperative and serves as a management tool to correctly adjust your strategy based on market feedback.
#11: Capital Accounts and Taxes
Date: March 21, 2020 (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)
Session Description and Purpose: This session is designed to provide the participants with a basic knowledge and understanding of introductory accounting terminology, techniques, and principles. The objectives of the course are: (1) development of a general understanding of financial reports and accounting analysis, (2) knowledge of basic accounting terminology and transactions,

#12: Capitalization and Financing
Date: March 28, 2020 (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)
Session Description and Purpose: Session discusses financing options for cooperatives, from the initial phase grant/seed funding to conventional or guaranteed loan programs. Learn about different lending sources share the sources available, terms and structures, as well as the fundamentals of credit, underwriting and loan process.

#13: Graduation, Presentation and Launch
Date: April 4, 2019 (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)
Session Description and Purpose: This final session is an opportunity for all participants to present their final assignments to the rest of the group and receive some comments and feedback. Cooperative Business Owners will be presenting.

Recommended Readings:
“About Co-ops – Cooperative Development Institute www. cdi.coop/resource-center/about-co-ops/
“Introduction to Worker-Owned Cooperatives” - NW Co-op Development Center www.nwcdc.coop
“What is a Worker Cooperative?” by US Federation of Worker Cooperatives
“Interview with Jessica Gordon Nembhard: The Deep Roots of African American Cooperative Organizing” by Mira Luna in Shareable
“Strategies for Developing Immigrant Worker Co-ops” by Hazel Corcoran of the Canadian Worker Cooperative Federation
“The Center for Family Life: Tackling Poverty and Social Isolation in Brooklyn with Worker Cooperatives” by Vanessa Bransburg in Grassroots Economic Organizing (GEO)
“Immigrant Worker Owned Cooperatives: A User’s Manual” by Minsun Ji, Founder and Former Director, El Centro Humanitario and Tony Robinson, Ph.D., University of Colorado Denver
“Democratic education in cooperative development” - Cultivate.Coop
“Hand, Head, and Heart techniques in cooperative education” - Cultivate.Coop
“Popular Education and the Spiral Model” - Education for Social Change Optional / For
“Embracing Change: Teaching in a Multicultural World” by bell hooks
“Engaged Pedagogy” by Bell Hooks, from Teaching to Transgress Optional:
“Making Systems of Privilege Visible” by Stephanie Wildman and Adrienne Davis
“AORTA Systems of Oppression and Conflict Resolution” Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance