

What is a Worker Co-operative?

Worker co-operatives are businesses owned and democratically controlled by the worker-members. Multi-stakeholder co-operatives, also known as solidarity co-operatives, are a hybrid model where workers and community stakeholders share control of the board.

The main purpose of a worker co-operative is to provide employment for its members through operating an enterprise owned by its workers and that follows the Co-operative Principles and Values. The worker co-op is, in principle, designed to provide benefits not just to the founding members but also to all future employee/members.

When new employees join the business, they are encouraged to apply for membership and become member/owners. On becoming a member, each person pays a membership fee, or purchases a membership share to become a member/owner. Through the democratic governance of the co-op, all members have an opportunity to affect the way the business is run and to offer input into the decisions affecting their everyday work lives.

Who is CWCF?

The Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation (CWCF) is a national, bilingual grassroots membership organization of and for worker cooperatives, related types of co-operatives (multi-stakeholder co-ops and worker-shareholder co-ops), and organizations that support the growth and development of worker cooperatives. CWCF was incorporated in 1992.

To learn more contact:

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The Rationale for Worker Co-operatives



Canadian Worker Cooperative Federation
La Fédération canadienne des coopératives de travail

Worker Co-operative Values

Create, join or
patronize a worker
co-operative today!

Democracy

The democratic structure provides an opportunity for worker co-operatives to be more responsible to their workers, their customers, their community and to the earth. At a time when many Canadians are searching for more meaningful work, worker co-operatives allow people to live their values at work.



Equality

As a rule, no single person or elite group gets all the profits in a worker co-operative, which leads to greater economic equality. Profits can instead be re-invested into the co-operative to create more jobs, to increase workers' wages, to decrease work hours or to be given to other fledgling co-operatives.



Co-operation

Co-operation has been central in many cultures throughout human history. In particular, many Indigenous cultures around the world are based around the values of co-operation and sharing of resources for the common good. By co-operating, we can meet our greatest challenges.

