



# **Board of Directors Candidate Information Kit**

**Updated in August, 2024**

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## 1. CWCF Description

The Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation is a national, bilingual grassroots membership organization of and for worker co-operatives, 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.

### Vision

To be a growing, cohesive network of democratically controlled worker co-ops that provide a high quality of worklife, and support the development of healthy, just and sustainable local economies, based on cooperative values and principles.

### Mission

1. To work in solidarity with our members to achieve our Vision of a Co-operative Economy;
2. To support the development of new worker co-ops;
3. To strengthen the Federation, to animate the worker co-operative movement; and
4. To represent and promote the Canadian worker co-op movement in Canada and internationally.

### Snapshot

There are about 65 worker co-op members in CWCF, in addition to three regional federation members (Le Réseau de la coopération du travail du Québec, the Quebec Federation of Forestry Co-operatives and the Quebec Federation of Paramedic Co-ops) as well as many associate members and developer members, and (having started with the bylaws in late 2023) Friends of the Federation. For worker co-op members, membership fees are 0.15% of a worker co-op's total wages. In 2024-25, CWCF revenues are projected to be approximately \$785,000, over half of which is from our *Common Good Capital* Registered Plan Program (RRSPs & TFSAs in eligible co-ops of all types, CED Funds, and non-profits which issue community bonds. CWCF's *Tenacity Works* Loan Fund is currently valued at nearly \$300,000, and we seek to grow it and/or work with the Canadian Co-operative Investment Fund to meet the financing needs of worker co-ops and related types of co-operatives.

CWCF has eight employees, most part-time, for a total of about five full-time equivalent staff. Hazel Corcoran is the Executive Director (FT at 35 hours/ week) and is based in Calgary though spends significant time in Nova Scotia (which happens to be the Province where CWCF's head office is located). Kaye Grant, based in Winnipeg, is the Operations and Member Services Manager (30 hours/ week). Kenzie Love in Calgary is the Communications Assistant (20 hours/ week), and Chloë Williams in Montreal is the Executive Assistant (FT). Ven Drake (they/them) are in Campbellford, ON and work very part-time as the IT Assistant (12 hours/ week), maintaining CWCF's website, trouble-shooting as needed, and providing advice / guidance on cyber-security.

The *Common Good Capital* ("CGC") Registered Plans Program is run out of our Kentville office, with 3 staff members. Kristin Van Hattem is the RRSP Program Manager / Bookkeeper (PT at her choice/ need, 24 hours/ week). Josh Dyke (the only FT staff member in the Program) is the RRSP Program Administrator, and Laura Ross the RRSP Program Assistant (PT). There are several past staff members in this Program in the region who can be called on if the RRSP season or other crunch times make the 3 core staff members too busy. There is a desire and plan to make the CGC Program fully digital whereby members who use it could access their balances and transaction online, but we have not yet had the time or attention to manage this project; we hope this will be possible in 2024-25, and we have budgeted for it. Another hope is to also offer it in French someday, if the Quebec WC Federations (or at least one of them) wishes to switch to CWCF's CGC Program from Desjardins Trust which provides this program, in French. There are far more worker co-ops in Quebec which are large enough to use this approach than in the rest of Canada; at least 10 or 11 members are required.

The CWCF Board of Directors has one representative from each of the five regions: British Columbia/Yukon, Prairies/NWT/Nunavut, Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic. There are also two At-Large Directors. The Length of a Board term is three years. There is no maximum number of terms that a Director can serve. Directors must come from either worker co-op members of CWCF (at least 5 out of 7); or Regional Federation members, Developer members, and/or Friends of the Federation (up to 2). Since 2021, there are also two BIPOC Advisors to the board whose terms are for one year each.

## **2. CWCF Membership Benefits**

### **Worker Co-operative Conferences, Workshops**

Members receive discounts on fees (and travel subsidies, for worker co-op members) to attend the CWCF annual conference. The conference includes training workshops, worker co-op tours and great opportunities for networking. When the Conference is held virtually (which will be in Nov. 2024, for the second time ever), it is free of charge and held with interpretation, FR-EN, EN-FR. In 2023, it was held in Quebec City, and in 2022 in Vancouver. CWCF Conferences are almost always very highly rated, with great learning opportunities, networking, inspiration for WC movement-building, and also a lot of fun!

### **Web-based Training**

CWCF provides webinar-based sessions to members. These free sessions cover topics as diverse as Worker Co-ops 101, Financial management, Governance - and many more. In addition, CWCF has recently developed the Worker Co-op Academy in conjunction with the Quebec Réseau COOP, an intensive online program first offered in 2021 and offered twice since, with one cohort underway now. It provides training and coaching support to start-up worker co-ops and is basically an incubator.

### **Worker Co-op Resources**

Staff can provide and help find worker co-op information and resources. CWCF helped create the CoopZone Developers' Network. CWCF also provides resources on [www.canadianworker.coop](http://www.canadianworker.coop). CWCF produces a monthly e-newsletter.

### **Access to Start-Up and Development Grants, and Capital**

The CWCF allocates small grants for start-ups and existing worker co-ops to hire a co-op developer or other professionals, of up to \$4,000 per co-op. CWCF's Tenacity Works Fund provides loans, typically in the \$20,000 to \$50,000 range, to members.

## ***Common Good Capital RRSP/TFSA Program***

The RRSP program allows the members of a worker co-op (or other type of co-op, CED Investment Fund, or non-profit which issues community bonds) to invest shares or bonds they own in their co-op into individual member's Self-Directed RRSPs, or TFSA's. There must be at least 10 people investing, preferably more, as rules require that no one can hold more than 10% of any class of shares and still use the RRSP Program. This Program has grown to become a successful social enterprise which helps to fund other CWCF programming, while helping to meet the need for community capital invested in various types of social enterprise.

## **Group Insurance Plan**

The Co-operators Group offers insurance plans to CWCF members, through the Member Benefits Program and Co-op Guard. A webinar is taking place on Sept. 18th on this for any type of CWCF member; see [this link](#).

## **Lobbying Efforts on Behalf of Worker Co-ops**

The CWCF is committed to ensuring that worker co-ops have a level playing field with other forms of business. For example, when worker co-op shares were not included in the RRSP regulations allowing small business shares as eligible investments, the CWCF lobbied successfully for their inclusion. In recent years, CWCF has been actively engaged in the lobby to create a Worker Co-op Business Succession program. It has successfully lobbied to have the capital gains tax provisions applied to sales to Employee Ownership Trusts also apply to worker co-operatives.

### **3. Role of the CWCF Board of Directors, and Eligibility**

- To represent the interests of CWCF membership - and the worker co-operative movement as a whole – ensuring that the Federation is run in accordance with the mission, vision and strategic direction set out by membership.
- To provide stewardship to the Federation, ensuring that it is run in a financially sustainable matter.

- To hire, support and replace, as appropriate, the Executive Director of the Federation, and also to evaluate the performance of and set compensation for the Executive Director.
- To be a conduit between the Federation and its membership and to propose, when necessary, changes to the Federation's mission, vision, and strategic direction.

In order to be eligible to run for the CWCF Board of Directors, one must be either a worker member of a CWCF worker co-op member, or else be nominated by a regional federation member or developer member, or be an approved Friend of the Federation. There is a maximum of two directors from regional federations, developer members, and friends who can sit on the Board at any given time. Currently, the only region with its own federations is Quebec. In addition, there are two BIPOC Advisors currently, one of whom is from near Toronto, and one from Edmonton. There is a diversity & inclusion matrix which guides who should run or be supported in a vote. (The Conference this year is virtual; on Nov. 19-21).

#### **4. Expectations of CWCF Board Members**

1. Attend and participate in the Board and members' meetings. There are typically four two-hour conference call Board meetings and two 1.5-day or 2-day in-person Board meetings each year. Board members' meeting expenses are covered by CWCF, and a modest honorarium is provided for board meetings and AGMs/ member Conferences (\$200 for full days including travel and \$100 for conference calls over 2 hours, all based on CWCF's policy).

The in-person board meetings generally take place 1) just prior to the Annual General Meeting (October/November) & 2) In the spring, often May or June. The location of the AGM rotates across the country (this year, in Ottawa on Nov. 11 and 12), and the Spring Board meeting takes place in a location easily accessible to most board members, often in Ontario.

(Note that since the start of the Covid19 pandemic, all meetings were held virtually, until June 2022 when we resumed in-person meetings with hybrid capacity using a Meeting Owl).

2. Come to the meetings prepared, having read the prepared documents. Count on 2-4 hours of preparation time.

3. Regional Directors provide a written regional report before each in-person Board meeting which provides highlights from the worker co-operative world within their region (e.g. new co-ops formed, updates on existing co-ops, news from regional co-op federations and provincial associations, etc.) Typically the Quebec regional director simply provides the newsletter(s) of the Quebec federation(s), if possible with a Google-translated version in English.

4. Complete any tasks to which one commits at the Board meetings in a timely manner.

5. If possible, participate in communication with worker co-op members in one's region in each year, as well as potential members, in conjunction with CWCF staff as appropriate. The exception is Quebec, where the focus is on contact with regional federations. (This task is primarily the responsibility of regional directors; at-large directors to help as appropriate and required. Note that with Quebec, the ED and the Executive Assistant, who lives in Quebec, are quite involved with contact with the Federations.)

6. In some cases, help to lead or facilitate at least one workshop or other session at the annual Conference, and assist the CWCF staff in hosting the Conference.

7. Serve on one or two CWCF committees. The Board (or Board and membership) committees are: Justice, Equity, Diversity, Decolonization and Inclusion (JEDDI), Government Relations, Strategic Plan Implementation, Personnel, Director Nominating, Conference Planning, Resolutions, Nominations, and the Tenacity Works Investment Fund Committee. There is a Business Succession Committee which has been fairly dormant. If there is a provincial co-op association, a director can consider participating in it (as a delegate or director).

The work of each committee ranges from very little in a typical year (e.g.,



Resolutions Committee, Nominating Committee) to an additional 4-6 conference calls per year, (e.g. Conference Planning Committee).

It is reasonable to expect that a Board Director would sit on at least one or two committees, but it is not technically required.

8. Represent CWCF to other organizations such as the relevant provincial association, the regional body of Co-operators, and/or, Co-operatives and Mutuels Canada, etc., as mutually agreed and when possible.

9. Fulfill other duties of a director in accordance with the federal *Canada Cooperatives Act*, CWCF bylaws and CWCF policies.

## **5. To Learn More**

If you would like to learn more about CWCF, see the CWCF web site: [www.canadianworker.coop](http://www.canadianworker.coop).

In particular, you can find the bylaws on this page of the CWCF site: <http://canadianworker.coop/about/cwcf-bylaws/> and an explanation of CWCF's democratic structure here: <http://canadianworker.coop/about/democratic-structure/>

## **6. Current Board Members**

For the list of current Board Members, as well as staff members, please see this link: <https://canadianworker.coop/board-staff/>.