Building Resilient Worker Co-ops



Photo: Radiate Consulting Los Angeles

www.usworker.coop

The U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives (USFWC) is the only national grassroots membership organization for worker cooperatives in the U.S.

Our mission is to build a thriving cooperative movement of stable, empowering jobs through **worker-ownership**.

We advance **worker-owned, -managed, and -governed** workplaces through **cooperative education, advocacy and development.**



Worker Benefits Program



Hands-on Technical Assistance



Networking & Organizing



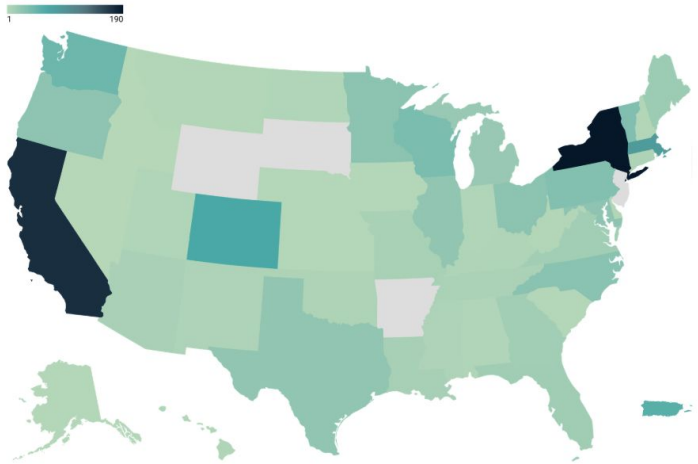
Public Policy & Advocacy

Worker Cooperatives in the United States

~1,300
Worker Co-ops

420+
Members

~16,000
Workers



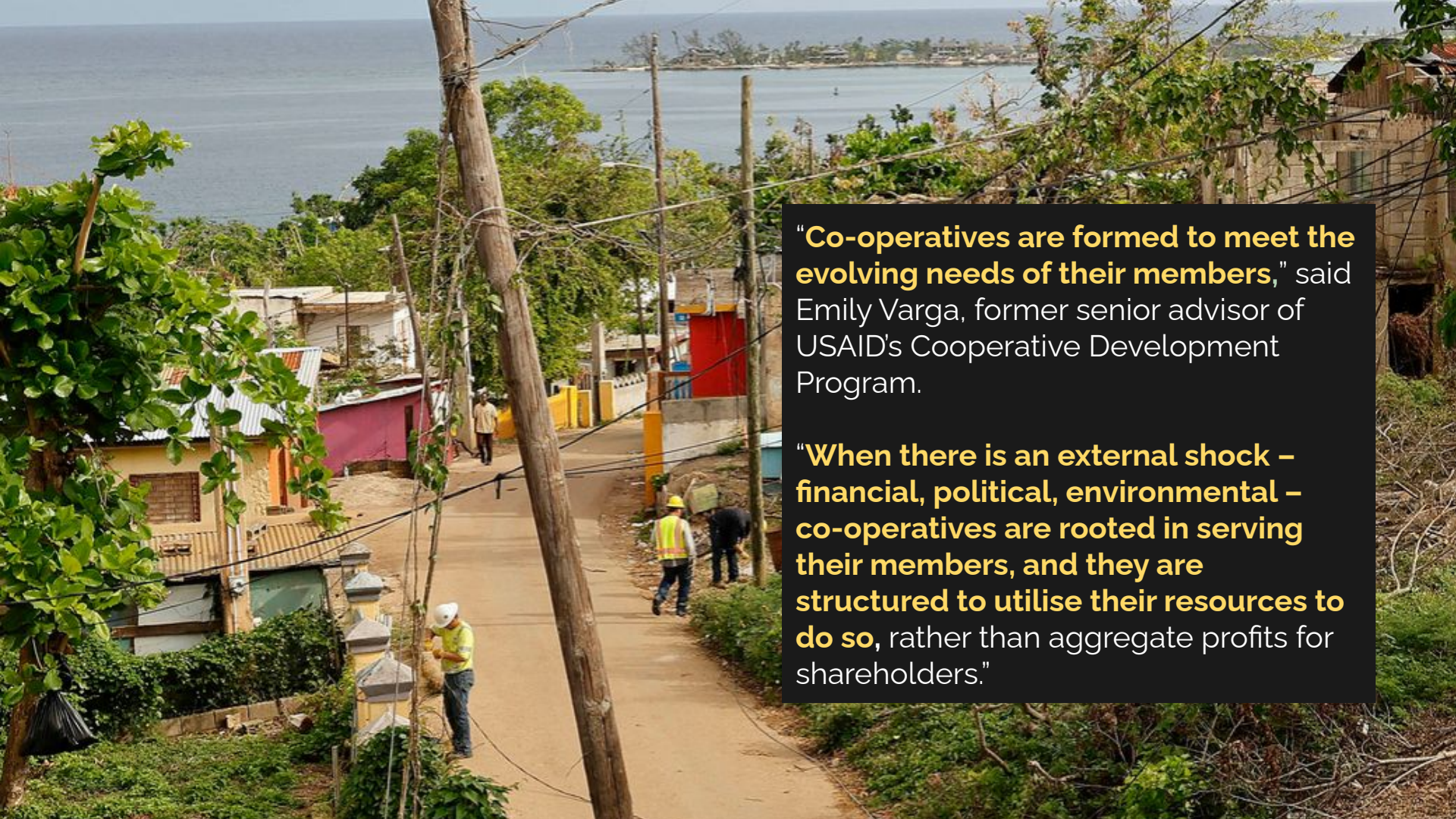
~65,000
U.S. Co-ops

1-in-3
Americans is a Co-op Member

1.44:1
pay ratio, in contrast to the 281:1 pay ratio at the typical U.S. corporation

Top Industries

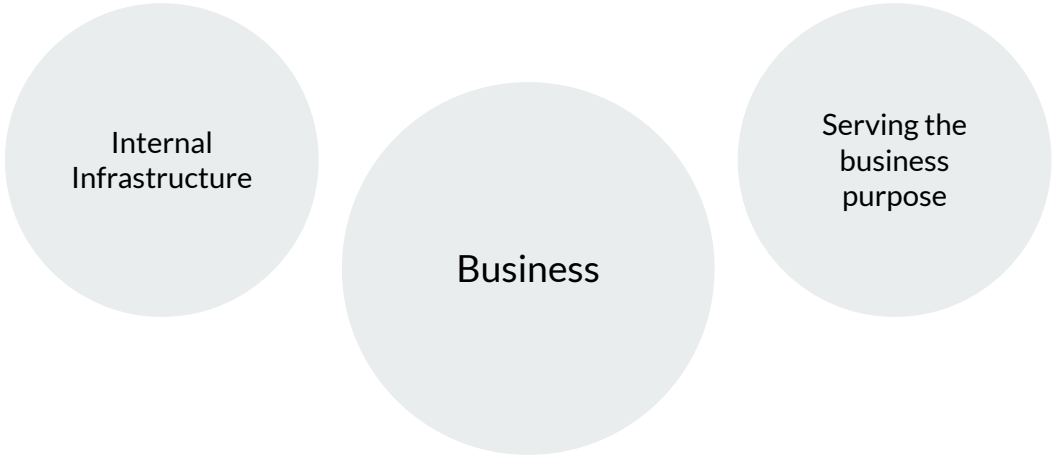
- Cleaning Services
- Education & Childcare
- Agriculture
- Restaurants, Cafes, Breweries, and Bars
- Business Support Services - Consulting



“**Co-operatives are formed to meet the evolving needs of their members,**” said Emily Varga, former senior advisor of USAID’s Cooperative Development Program.

“**When there is an external shock – financial, political, environmental – co-operatives are rooted in serving their members, and they are structured to utilise their resources to do so,** rather than aggregate profits for shareholders.”

Traditional Business



Cooperative Business



- **P1: Voluntary and Open Membership**
- **P4: Autonomy and Independence**

Internal Infrastructure

Business

Serving the business purpose

- **P2: Democratic Member Control**
- **P3: Member Economic Participation**
- **P5: Education, Training, and Information**

Worker Rights and care

Cooperative Movement Building

- **P6: Cooperation Among Cooperatives**
- **P7: Concern for Community**

Cooperative Business



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- P4: Autonomy and Independence

Internal Infrastructure

Supply Chain Pressures
Climate Change

Business

Serving the business purpose

Attacks to small business - new legislation, regulation changes

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Worker Rights and care

Immigration Attacks
Attacks on LGBTQIA+ Communities

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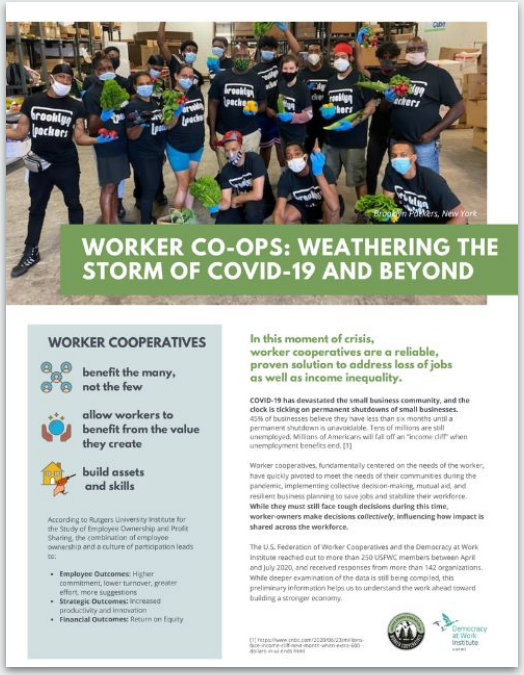
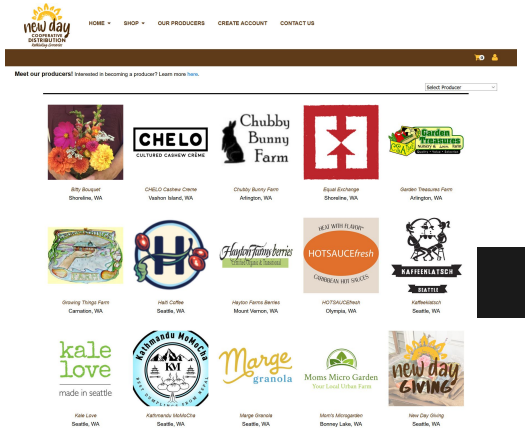


WORKER CO-OPS: WEATHERING THE STORM OF COVID-19 AND BEYOND



New Structures



Worker-centered reaction to economic issues



86% OF WORKER COOPERATIVES

had structures in place to quickly make decisions in the workplace, and so were able to more easily adapt in response to COVID-19.

Why people look to cooperatives

1. To address market failures where neither the existing private sector nor the government has an answer;
2. To help small players compete with larger businesses; and
3. To give consumers a deliberate choice of enterprise to better meet their common needs and aspirations.

Cooperating for a Better Tomorrow : A Policymakers' Guide: Promoting Access, Agility and Affordability in Today's Economy through Cooperatives, U.S. Co-ops



Public Policy and Advocacy

- Advancing priorities and legislation in Congress
- Advising regional grassroots organizations on state and local initiatives
- Hosting discussions and articulate priorities, particularly through the P&A Council
- Creating and curating advocacy trainings and accessible tools

Policy Avenues for Strength and Change



Education

- Co-op resolutions
- Congressional Co-op Business Caucus
- Small Business and Provider training



Support for High-road business
(e.g. co-ops!)

- Grant Programs
- Inclusion in regional and national programs (SSBCI, CHIPS and Science Act)
- Pilot projects for new models
- Industry preferences



Co-op Friendly tax treatment

- Access to loan programs and incentives

Worker supports and protections

- Fair Labor Standards
- Access to benefits
- Working within Coalitions