

About BCCA

The BC Co-op Association is the knowledge and resources centre for co-operatives in BC.

We are where co-operatives and credit unions collaborate, network, get support, learn, and contribute knowledge to shape BC's co-op movement.

We provide resources for developing co-operatives, support for established co-ops, and help guide existing businesses to become co-operatives. To learn more, please visit bccca.coop



Join the Co-operative Movement!

- Shop at local co-operatives
- Bank with a credit union
- Start a co-operative



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A Pocket Guide to Co-operatives



What is a co-operative?

A co-operative is a **people-centred** business owned by and operated to benefit those using its services.

Co-operatives can be found across all industries and sectors. The business owners - referred to as *members* - may be customers, employees, users, or residents.

As businesses driven by values, not just profit, co-operatives share common, internationally agreed-upon principles and act together to build a better community and world through cooperation.

How do co-operatives work?

Aside from the ownership structure, there are a few other distinct features that set co-operatives apart from other types of business. Co-operatives are **democratic** and **equitable**.

Members have a financial stake in the co-operative and, in turn, have a say in how the business is operated.

Every member receives an equal vote in electing a Board of Directors. The board makes decisions for the co-operative that serve the membership such as hiring staff, growing the co-operative, and investing in the community.

Why start a co-op?

Values-Driven: Co-operatives are based upon mutual aid, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity. Since co-ops often operate on a local scale, the economic benefits of co-ops support the prosperity of local communities.

Resilient: Statistically, co-operatives have a 70% higher five-year survival rate when compared to traditional businesses. Moreover, when other businesses shut down, co-operatives are more likely to pull together to provide sustainable economic solutions."

Adaptable: Because of their structure, co-ops often have more flexibility to evolve to cater to the changing needs of their membership.

