



COOPERATIVE
DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTE

The Northeast Center
for Cooperative Business

www.cdi.coop

Arts Co-ops 101

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What is a Cooperative?

Cooperatives come in many shapes and sizes. They are enterprises formed by groups of people who voluntarily develop, jointly own and democratically control the enterprise to meet their common economic, social or cultural needs.

Do you know any organizations that fit this description? Name one or two. What about them do you like or dislike?

Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity.

Cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Which of these values, if any, stand out to you? Why is it important to have a values-based enterprise?

The cooperative principles are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Cooperation among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

Did any of these principles surprise you? These have been identified as necessary for cooperatives' success. What else might also be necessary for success?

Philosophy/Relationships

If you want something done right, do it yourself

We can do more together than we can on our own.

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

Do you agree with any of these statements? What makes working together work? What makes it awful?

Do you have relationships based on reciprocity (rather than individualism or altruism)? How are these demanding? Rewarding?

Bringing it to Life

Feeling inspired? Create a representation of what you'd like to see in your own life.

...Why do you want it?

...Where is it?

...Who is part of it?

...What do you do together?

...What difference does it make to your life, livelihood, or art?

...How do you relate to each other and other stakeholders?

...When will it start?



Pursue your Passion

shared spaces

shared sourcing

shared
abundance

shared
connections

shared work

studios and
practice space

purchase
materials,
instruments

share tools,
share spaces

networking,
continuing
education

group
performance,
commission
work, collectives

Earn a living

gallery and
performance

shared services:
billing,
marketing, etc.

barter for
services,
contribute to
microgrants

travel,
broadcasting,
publishing,
classes for
public

standard
setting, jurying

live your life

housing:
permanent and
temporary

food growing,
purchase,
preparation

babysitting,
food exchange,
time exchange

socializing

temp/part-time
jobs, jobs with
time for creative
pursuits



**Pursue
your
Passion**

**Earn a
living**

**live
your
life**

shared spaces

Talking Dolls,
Detroit

U Street Music
Hall

ArtCondo

shared sourcing

Clay Art Pottery
Co-op

Ujamaa
Collective

GLUT
Food Co-op

shared
abundance

OurGoods

Valley Art Share

Windham Area
Art Exchange

shared
connections

Network of
Ensemble
Theaters

PictureTank

Keskidee Centre,
London

shared work

Association for
the
Advancement of
Creative
Musicians

Art Center
Cooperative

3B B&B

...and many more!