

COOPERATION BUFFALO

Full-Time Cooperative Developer Job Announcement

About Cooperation Buffalo:

Cooperation Buffalo is a community-led resource center, a team of cooperative business developers and educators, and a community-controlled non-extractive loan fund. We mobilize workers to achieve economic security through cooperative business ownership, generating wealth and power in communities most affected by inequality.

We engage our community in training and education in cooperative economics and do work to grow economic democracy and an ecosystem of cooperatively owned enterprises in Buffalo and Western New York.

We support the start-up of new worker cooperatives and conversions of existing businesses to worker ownership that meet the criteria of our [Values Filter](#). We offer technical assistance to other cooperatives when we can.

We circulate capital to cooperatives in a non-extractive way through our membership in [Seed Commons](#), a national financial cooperative that is dedicated to financing democratically owned companies, particularly for workers who have been undervalued and pushed to the margins of the economy due to race, origin, economic or immigration status, gender, and age.

Cooperation Buffalo is led by Buffalo cooperators: community members with experience launching and working in worker cooperatives, housing cooperatives, collectives, and community land trusts. Cooperatives that receive support from Cooperation Buffalo will join the governance of the organization and the loan fund, participating in democratic decisions regarding loans, long-term strategy, and what services to provide.

Job Description:

The Cooperative Developer will work in collaboration with the Executive Director, the Board of Directors, and other staff and contractors to implement and co-manage the organization's Cooperative Development, Lending, Popular Education, and Ecosystem Development programs. Work includes direct technical assistance to cooperative businesses, serving as loan officer to select cooperative businesses, design and delivery of popular education programs, and engaging in networking and coalition building to develop an ecosystem of support for cooperatives. These programs will facilitate the development and sustainability of worker-owned cooperative businesses in Buffalo and

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Western New York that provide living wage jobs, generate wealth, and cultivate leadership in low-income communities.

Responsibilities:

1. Cooperative Development and Lending (60% of workload)
 - a. Serve as business developer for cooperative business projects that meet the Cooperation Buffalo project criteria, including both start-ups and conversions of existing businesses in the community to cooperative ownership.
 - b. Train projects, as necessary, in business and financial planning, governance, management, communication, and conflict resolution and/or coordinate the provision of this training by other service providers.
 - c. Connect projects to appropriate technical assistance providers as needed.
 - d. Conduct intake and readiness assessments for prospective business and individual program participants.
 - e. Work with Loan Coaches from the Seed Commons Community Wealth Cooperative to prepare cooperative projects for financing. Present projects in need of funding to the Sustainability Committee of Seed Commons to obtain non-extractive financing.
 - f. Follow up financing with continued relationship, monitoring, and support according to an agreed upon plan and performance standards. Support cooperatives to determine why goals were not met, why they were exceeded, and strategies to pivot for maximum business sustainability.
2. Popular Education and Ecosystem Development (25% of workload)
 - a. In collaboration with other staff and contractors and other partner organizations, develop political education materials and present public outreach events (such as film screenings, forums, co-op cafes, and workshops) with the goals of finding fundable projects and reaching underserved communities.
 - b. Participate in the design and provision of the annual Cooperative Academy training course with other staff and contractors.

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- c. Serve as a spokesperson and resource for cooperative education in the community. Regularly meet with community leaders and organizations to grow the cooperative movement.
 - d. Connect existing leaders in the Buffalo cooperative movement to develop shared language and goals and build a collective agenda.
3. Management and Organizational Development (15% of workload)
- a. Provide regular reports to the Board of Directors through collaboration with the Strategy Workgroup and the Executive Director.
 - b. Lead other Cooperative Development staff on projects while serving as the Lead Project Steward for those projects.
 - c. Support the organization in managing the program budget including developing budget proposals, justifying expenses, and monitoring expenditures.
 - d. Support the organization by being an active participant in democratic teams including Internal Workgroups, the Cooperative Development & Lending Workgroup and the Staff Assembly. Participate in organizational development to enhance and sustain a democratic workplace.
 - e. Occasionally participate in grant writing and reporting, and other efforts to raise capital and support for organizational activities with other staff and the Board of Directors.
 - f. Build relationships with, learn from, and collaborate with regional and national leaders in cooperative development. Participate in professional development training and conferences for cooperative development.
 - g. Perform other related duties as assigned.

Qualifications:

Our ideal candidate would have some combination of the following qualifications:

- A business developer experienced in writing business plans, including work on financial documents (e.g., projections, budgets, capital plans), and analyzing business opportunities
- A community organizer with experience in the field of economic justice
- Existing connections to cooperatives and the cooperative movement

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- Experience in maintaining relationships with movement-related organizations and coordinating/drawing on the resources of people from multiple organizations
- Demonstrated social leadership skills such as community formation, meeting facilitation and coordination, democratic decision-making, direct communication, mediation, and conflict resolution
- Experience in mentorship, leadership development, education, curriculum writing, and program development
- Experience with democratic management structures and non-extractive financing

Skills:

- A clear and coherent communicator in both written and oral forms
- Personally well-organized and able to create and maintain appropriate online and physical files and communications systems
- Experience working with diverse populations and building authentic relationships
- Bilingual in English and Spanish, or other languages spoken in Buffalo (desired but not required)

Required Availability:

- Available to participate in all training and network calls of the Seed Commons Community Wealth Cooperative of which Cooperation Buffalo is a member
- Ability to adapt to a dynamic and shifting work environment and manage the unexpected

Location: Buffalo, NY. This is a hybrid position requiring both in person and remote work.

Status: Full time, salary, 35 hours per week

Compensation and Benefits:

- A starting annual salary of \$51,870 with a transparent compensation scale that increases over time for all staff
- Health, dental and vision insurance
- Paid vacation, sick time, and paid holidays
- The opportunity to work in an organization that is worker-led and worker-focused, where much of your work and schedule is self-directed

To Apply:

Please [submit a cover letter and resume here](#). Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis and we aim to make a hiring decision by April 2023.