

**COOPERATION  BUFFALO**

2021 Annual Report

# COVID-19 Response

We continued our **COVID-19 Relief Fund** from 2020 through 2021, distributing a total of **\$71,100** in microgrants to 75 Buffalo co-ops, workers, and other small businesses owned by people of color, immigrants, queer and trans folx, formerly incarcerated, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized identities.

COOPERATION  BUFFALO

COVID-19

**Relief  
Fund**

**For Buffalo co-ops  
and small businesses**

# Co-op Education

We hosted **Worker Co-op Jumpstart**, a place to start for those interested in starting a new co-op, converting a current business into a cooperative, or joining the movement to ditch capitalism and build economic democracy in Buffalo.

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## Worker Co-op Jumpstart

**Saturday, May 22, 2021**

**1 pm to 5 pm**

[cooperationbuffalo.org/jumpstart](https://cooperationbuffalo.org/jumpstart)

# Co-op Education

We held our third **Cooperative Academy**, a 13-week training program for teams of entrepreneurs to learn how to grow cooperative businesses that build wealth and solidarity. In 3 years we've trained **109 co-op entrepreneurs** through the Academy in cohorts that are consistently 2/3 BIPOC and 2/3 women, trans, and gender non-conforming.



# Ecosystem Development

We launched a promotional campaign called **#ShopCoopBFLO** to highlight small, local, cooperatively owned businesses rooted in our community. Our local co-ops offer a wide array of services and products, and meet important community needs.

*Photos from worker co-ops Art's Cafe and Gro-operative*



# Ecosystem Development

We built connections with existing small business services and economic development organizations to grow interest in worker co-ops as a succession plan for retiring business owners, and co-hosted events with **WEDI** and the **Small Business Development Center at SUNY Buffalo State**.

**COOPERATION**  **BUFFALO** **WEDI** Education. Entrepreneurship. Equity.

**“Worker Cooperatives:  
A Resilient Alternative Business Model”**

**Date:** October 27, 2021  
**Time:** 4 to 5pm

**Presenters:** Michael Heubusch & Andrew Delmonte

What is a worker cooperative, and is the cooperative model right for your business? Join Cooperation Buffalo as we introduce answer these questions and discuss how cooperative businesses are proven to be resilient and adaptable, especially during precarious economic times.

Register on eventbrite to receive the Zoom link for the workshop

[www.cooperationbuffalo.org](http://www.cooperationbuffalo.org)  
[www.wedibuffalo.org](http://www.wedibuffalo.org)



# Co-op Development

We received 27 inquiries for potential new co-op projects, held 20 initial consultations, and made intake decisions to begin incubating 7 of those co-ops.



# Co-op Development

In 2021, we spent 100+ hours with the worker-owners of **Rose Garden Early Childhood Center**, 100+ hours with a team planning to convert an existing **West Side tree care business** to a worker co-op, and 80+ hours with a **cafe and bakery start-up**. We also worked with several co-op projects in early stages of development, including a Black-owned credit union, a shared services co-op for entrepreneurs of color, and a producer co-op.



# Non-Extractive Lending

As members of **Seed Commons**, a national financial cooperative composed of peers spread across the US, we've supported the investment of over **\$15.3 million** into cooperatively-owned businesses that create jobs, build wealth, and challenge inequality.



# Non-Extractive Lending

In 2021, we secured two non-extractive loans totaling \$69,000 for a start-up worker cooperative owned by experienced bakers and food service workers who found themselves out of work after their boss closed up shop in October.



# Advocacy

In 2021 we continued our participation in the **New York State Community Equity Agenda Coalition**, calling for policies and actions that transform our fundamentally unjust social, political and economic systems. In July, our Cornell High Road Fellow Harry Ducrepin completed a policy brief to guide our local and regional advocacy efforts.

# Advocacy

In May, we presented at Cornell ILR Buffalo CoLab's **High Road Policy Summit** alongside State Senator Sean Ryan, Councilmember David Rivera, and co-op attorney Jonathan Johnsen to discuss worker cooperative development in Western New York. We also spoke with the **Erie County Business Task Force** about the potential for worker buyouts to save local businesses at risk of closure during the pandemic.

# Changes for 2022

After nearly 3 years of close partnership with PUSH Buffalo, Cooperation Buffalo is **taking our next bold step** to grow the co-op movement in Buffalo and Western New York by stepping out on our own. PUSH and Cooperation Buffalo will continue to work together on projects that **build a New Economy, center worker solidarity, and ensure community control of resources.**



# THANK YOU!

A community-controlled economy requires community power to sustain it. Thank you to all of our volunteers, donors, partners, and community members. Learn more and get involved at our website [cooperationbuffalo.org](https://cooperationbuffalo.org)

