

Use Advisers and Committees Effectively

Organizing human resources and effectively using their expertise, along with maximum participation by potential members is central to any successful business and crucial to the success of the cooperative.

- Start by selecting potential members with an eye for expertise when setting up the general steering committee.
(Finding true specialists may not be possible among the leaders interested in organizing a cooperative, however, some may have an interest in areas that enables them to better understand the "language" of technical advisers.)
- Have an adviser on cooperative organization work with others to help them apply their expertise to the cooperative situation whenever it differs from other forms of business.
- Subcommittees used in the formation process should focus on membership, facilities, site selection, finance, legal documents, and communications.
(In some cases, one or more of these can be combined.)
- Committees also are useful in the ongoing management of the cooperative and can specialize in the same areas used in the formation process within the board.
(Additional, temporary or permanent committees, might include: advisory groups for youth and young member activities, education and training, long-term planning, commodities and services, member and public relations, and legislative affairs.)

Some material adapted from USDA Rural Development publications on cooperative development