

Cooperatives are user-owned and user-controlled businesses formed to benefit a group of members. Cooperatives are designed to reward use, encourage users to commit to using the services, and encourage users to voice opinions about how the business is doing.

Homecare Worker Cooperative Academy

The Nebraska Cooperative Development Center, in partnership with the Northwest Cooperative Development Center of Washington state, has developed a six-week Homecare Worker Cooperative Academy designed to take caregivers through the cooperative development process. Interested caregivers across Nebraska are invited to participate.

Worker cooperatives, which traditionally have higher pay, higher employee retention and higher levels of worker satisfaction, can provide an employment alternative to homecare workers who want to have a say in how their homecare business is run. In a homecare cooperative, caregivers are the owners of the business and make decisions through a democratic process.

Why the Homecare Worker Cooperative Pilot.

Aging America

- From 2016 to 2060, the population Americans 65 and older is projected to nearly double from 49.2 million to 94.7 million.
- The number of Americans 85 and older is projected to nearly triple from 6.4 million to 19 million.
- 10,000 Americans are retiring every day.
- For the first time in history, people over 65 will outnumber children under 5.

Census.gov

Caregiver shortage

- Currently there are about 3 million direct care workers and, by 2030, the industry will need approximately 5 million.
- Homecare workers are the fastest growing jobs in the country; the demand for these positions is expected to increase by 70% in the next 20 years.
- Low wages, in 2021 the average wage of a homecare worker was \$14.09 with few benefits, make recruiting difficult.
- The homecare industry has an ageing workforce with a median age of 48. In 2021, 57% of homecare workers were over 45, with 12% over 65.
- The industry experiences a persistently high turnover rates of close to 75%.

Census data compiled by PHI (formally the Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute)

What is a Homecare Worker Cooperative?

- A private business that is owned and operated by the people who work for the business.
- A worker co-op is owned democratically by its members - each member owns one share of the business.
- Member-owners set the wages, benefits and policies.
- Members have a say in how the business is managed.
- Members have a greater influence on the quality of care.
- Profits go back to the workers.

Want to learn more about the Homecare Worker Cooperative Pilot Program?

Contact Cindy Houlden, Cooperative Development Specialist, choulden2@unl.edu

Homecare Worker Cooperative Academy Topics

Session 1.

MAKING DECISIONS – DEMOCRACY IN THE WORKPLACE

Goals: Participants review and practice different decision-making models, participants understand the roles of the Board/Manager/Members in co-op governance.

Session 2.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION – BUSINESS BASICS

Goals: Participants create a basic business plan, Identify the skills and experience needed to run the business and take inventory of the group's skills.

Session 3.

SHOW ME THE MONEY – UNDERSTANDING YOUR CO-OP FINANCES

Goals: Participants learn how to read financial statements, understand basic financial terms and systems used in their co-op. Participants understand how financial decisions are made in the co-op.

Session 4.

TELLING YOUR STORY – MARKETING YOUR CO-OP

Goals: Participants will develop a one-page marketing plan and will learn how to market their co-op and how to train other co-op members to do the same.

Session 5.

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT – INSPIRATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Goals: Participants will identify and understand the many accountability systems that will run through the co-op. Participants will practice "difficult conversations" and develop their active listening skills.

Session 6.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT – BRINGING DEMOCRACY ALIVE IN THE WORKPLACE!

Goals: Participants understand the importance of making democracy a priority in their co-op and have a plan to implement various systems for democratic participation within their cooperative. This session will facilitate discussion on building systems for meaningful member participation and power sharing within the co-op. Presentation will include testimony from Washington homecare co-op members on how their co-op brings democracy alive in the workplace.

For more information, contact:

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<https://ncdc.unl.edu/homecare-worker-cooperative-academy-pilot>