

*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 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 can participate as owners of the business and make decisions through a democratic process.

### **Arapahoe Homecare Cooperative**

In 2021, the Arapahoe Good Samaritan Society care facility closed, leaving the community of 1,002 without an assisted living facility or nursing home. With 25.8% of residents over 65, Arapahoe community leaders are working to identify resources to allow residents to safely remain in their home.

In 2022, leaders participated in the Homecare Worker Cooperative Academy sponsored by the Nebraska Cooperative Development Center. The Academy is designed to take caregivers through the Homecare Worker Cooperative organization process.

In 2024 we are excited to announce the formation of the Republican River Valley Homecare Cooperative!

### **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.

### **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 rate of close to 75%.

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

### **What is a Homecare Cooperative?**

- A private business that is owned and operated by the stakeholders, which can include workers, consumers, and community members.
- A Homecare Cooperative 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 member owners and the community where they live.

### **Next Steps**

- Complete survey.
- Form a steering committee.
- Exploration of formation of Homecare Cooperative.

### **Want to learn more about forming a Homecare Cooperative?**

Contact Cindy Houlden, Cooperative Development Specialist, [choulden2@unl.edu](mailto:choulden2@unl.edu)

The Nebraska Cooperative Development Center (NCDC) is located in the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. NCDC programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture. NCDC is funded in part by the USDA RCDG and SDGG Grant Programs.

# Homecare Worker Cooperative Engagement Topics

## **Topic 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.

## **Topic 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.

## **Topic 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.

## **Topic 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.

## **Topic 5.**

### **PEOPLE MANAGEMENT – INSPIRATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Goals: Participants will identify and understand the many accountability systems that will run through the cooperative. Participants will practice “difficult conversations” and develop their active listening skills. Hiring processes and Employee manuals will be introduced.

## **Topic 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 Topic will facilitate discussion on building systems for meaningful member participation and power sharing within the co-op.

## **Topic 7.**

### **LEGAL STRUCTURES**

Goals: Participants will review legal document drafts including Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Membership Agreements.