

# Valley Alliance of Worker Co-operatives

## Member Co-op Services and Needs Assessment



*"The Valley Alliance of Worker Co-operatives is rooted in the ideals of co-operation, mutuality and solidarity. VAWC is itself an expression of co-operative principles — a "co-op of co-ops" that have come together as a means of strengthening the efforts of our individual co-ops to develop their businesses, serve their members, and contribute to the wider co-operative economy. Our core goal is to provide ourselves with the resources and support we need to advance our co-operatives, empower our members, and benefit more people in our communities."*

1.413.268.5800  
[www.valleyworker.coop](http://www.valleyworker.coop)  
[info@valleyworker.coop](mailto:info@valleyworker.coop)

**Together, We're Working for a Co-operative Economy**

## Introduction

Together, We're **Working** for a Co-operative Economy

The Valley Alliance of Worker Co-operatives is rooted in the ideals of co-operation, mutuality and solidarity. VAWC is itself an expression of co-operative principles — a “co-op of worker co-ops” that have come together as a means of strengthening the efforts of our individual co-ops to develop their businesses, serve their members, and contribute to the wider co-operative economy. Our core goal is to provide ourselves with the resources and support we need to advance our co-operatives, empower our members, and benefit more people in our communities.

The first point of VAWC’s Mission Statement is to serve our members. We are offering you a statement of service and activities from which you can choose. Upon receipt of Member Co-op forms VAWC’s Board with assistance from Staff and Member Representatives will develop a work plan including if at all possible your work request.

The idea here is to provide you with a list from which you can check a box and add comments. Should you not find something you’re looking for write it in the lined section at the end of the section or the comment area at the end of the form. Here’s other things we provide or can connect you to:

## Co-operative Support and Development

### Entity Creation and Founding Documents

- Articles of Incorporation
- Bylaws
- Mission, Vision, Values Statements

### Structure and Governance

- Decision making models and support
- Meeting Design
- Facilitation
- Policy templates and recommendations

## Membership Development and Compensation

- Membership Benefits and Responsibility
- Programming
- Accountability mechanisms
- Evaluations
- Hiring
- Co-operative participation training and education

## Co-operative Business operations

- Payroll
- Loan Package assistance
- Feasibility Studies
- Business and Expansion planning
- Accounting
- Financial Literacy
- Professional Services: legal, insurance, tax prep, etc
- Information Technology (IT) in databases, management, document creation and storage
- Other activities or services in Co-op Support and Development \_\_\_\_\_



## Marketing and Public Relations

Our **Working** for a Co-operative Economy ad campaign features Members and is printed in 3 food co-op newsletters, reaching over 13,000 members in our region as well as the United States Federation of Worker Co-operatives newsletter. We also participate in WRSI/WHMP’s Annual Co-op Month Educational Spots. Staff works with Members to create and implement marketing strategies.



VAWC Members are plugged into a network of co-operatives who prioritize patronizing other co-ops. Through press releases, local and movement media and online commentary VAWC raises awareness of its Members and their support co-op. Our web and social media presence bring attention to our activities as well as those of individual Member Co-ops.



- Advertisement creation
- Web site and social media creation and design
- Local and movement media contacts
- Sales
- Co-operative Identity and Branding
- Other activities or services in Marketing and Public Relations \_\_\_\_\_

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### Co-operative Education and Advocacy

#### *Co-operative Enterprise Collaborative*

We co-create and manage curriculum with faculty, students and the Neighboring Food Co-op Association at UMass, Amherst. The CEC provides classes about co-operatives, internships and classroom visits from co-operators.

#### *Member Education*

VAWC Members receive a VAWC Owners Manual describing operations and history of their own co-op as well as that of VAWC.

#### *Conference Presence and Presentations*

VAWC presents at numerous local and movement conferences, classrooms and events.

- Seats in our co-op class curriculum
- Modules on the VAWC Owners Manual
- Co-op History, Co-op Development, Co-op Led support organizations, conversions, etc.
- Political Advocacy and Legislative Engagement
- Other activities or services in Co-operative Education and Advocacy \_\_\_\_\_

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### Interco-operation

Our vision of a thriving co-operative system depends on interco-operation and partnership among and across all sectors. We co-founded the Valley Co-operative Business Association (VCBA), attend several conferences and are members of the United States Federation of Worker Co-operatives (USFWC). VAWC Member Co-ops receive 50% off membership to the USFWC and 25% off membership in VCBA as well as being a part of our ongoing collaboration with Neighboring Food Co-op Association and Co-operative Fund of New England.

- Worker Co-op Collaboration - Contact and discount on membership with United States Federation of Worker Co-operatives,
- Contact with Eastern Conference for Workplace Democracy.
- Cross Sector Collaboration - Contact and Membership discount with Valley Co-operative Business Association
- Contact with Neighboring Food Co-op Association, contacts with National Co-operative Business Association, International Co-operative Alliance.
- Other activities or services in Interco-operation \_\_\_\_\_

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Other Goals or Needs:

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