

Coalition for Worker Ownership & Power (COWOP)

The [COWOP coalition](#) is a growing statewide network that aims to bring together worker co-ops and developers, grassroots organizations and labor unions, and funders and investors to resource and coordinate the advancement of a worker ownership movement across Massachusetts. We aim to grow infrastructure statewide to advance worker ownership by reducing barriers for marginalized constituencies, and by increasing efficiencies and supports for those seeking assistance and community among like-minded partners.

2021-2022 Policy Platform:

Grants & Loan Guarantees

\$4 million capital pool to facilitate the development of new worker-owned and self-directed enterprises, particularly during the vulnerable start-up phase. This fund would be administered by the Cooperative Fund of New England, which already administers grants and loans in the sector. We aim to resource this fund via the federal Covid relief (ARPA) supplemental budget(s) in 2021 or 2022, and Sen. Julian Cyr has agreed to be a primary sponsor of this effort in the Legislature.

Technical Assistance

\$250,000 fund for technical assistance providers to support new cooperative enterprises, proposed to be administered by the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation (MGCC), under its Small Business Technical Assistance program. Again, we propose to resource this fund via amendments filed by Sen. Julian Cyr to the federal Covid relief (ARPA) supplemental budget(s) in 2021 or 2022.

Training

The coalition has worked with Reps. Paul Mark and Erika Uytterhoeven to file [H.2059](#), An Act Expanding Worker Ownership Training Opportunities, which would create access for new and aspiring worker-owners to existing state-funded trainings offered under the Training Opportunities Program, On-The-Job training program or Workforce Investment Opportunity Act. These programs would create training options that cover essential skills for effective business management and administration.

Workers on Corporate Boards (Co-determination)

COWOP supports the passage of [S.1223](#), An Act Ensuring Fair Worker Representation on Corporate Boards of Directors filed by Sens. Jason Lewis and Jamie Eldridge, which would require at least 40% of the board of directors be elected by employees at MA corporations with over \$100 million in annual revenue. This form of workplace democracy could enable major advances in equity and corporate accountability as well as worker morale and retention.

Coalition member organizations and allies are contributing resources needed to advance this platform, including media capacity, legislative mobilization, technical resources and so on. We welcome all those who share our goal of increasing workers' agency over their economic lives to help democratic workplaces flourish across our commonwealth.

Contact:

Alex Papali, Political Director
Center for Economic Democracy
alex@economicdemocracy.us