

## The Government of Manitoba is committed to ensuring the success of co-operatives. Our strategy includes:

**Co-operative Development Services** are provided free to groups looking to form a new, or transform an existing business into a co-operative. For more information, please call: 204-945-3379.

**The Co-operative Tax Credit Fund** provides support for new and expanding co-ops. It is funded through contributions from co-operatives and credit unions who receive a declining tax credit on contributions of up to \$50,000 per year. This is the first tax credit of its kind in Canada.

**The Co-operative Assistance Fund** provides up to \$2,000 for infrastructure and environmental initiatives.

**The Co-operative Promotion Board and the Co-operative Loans and Loans Guarantee Board** support co-operative organizations with grants for promotion, and loan guarantees to viable co-operatives.

**Co-operative Curriculum** provides a free, online, detailed written program on co-op development, available at [http://www.gov.mb.ca/housing/coop/coop\\_curric.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/housing/coop/coop_curric.html).



# Co-operatives in Manitoba

Building strong businesses,  
building stronger communities!

On December 18, 2009, the United Nations declared the year 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives. The Government of Manitoba is proud to help co-operatives across the province celebrate this declaration.

To find out more about the programs discussed in this brochure, or the many other ways the Government of Manitoba is supporting co-ops, go to:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/housing/coop/>

Manitoba co-ops build our economy and our communities. Join a co-op today and share the benefits.



Manitoba 

## What is a co-operative?

A co-operative (or co-op) is an enterprise that is owned and controlled by its members. Like any business, a co-op provides goods or services, but co-ops are governed by a membership where each member has one vote in the co-op's direction and key decisions.

Over 400 co-ops provide a range of products and services province-wide; from fitness centres and childcare co-ops, to grocery and hardware stores. Co-ops in Manitoba are comprised of 800,000 members and hold over \$14 billion in assets.

## Why do Manitobans choose co-operatives?

Manitobans use co-ops to reinvest in their communities, reduce costs, and more effectively meet their individual and community interests.

## How do co-operatives benefit Manitoba communities?

Co-operatives are formed to meet a local need or priority that is not otherwise being met. They are locally owned and controlled. This means very high accountability to the local community, ensuring that activities are relevant and responsive to local needs. For example, co-ops often demonstrate concrete action towards environmental and social sustainability. Co-operative profits are reinvested into the enterprise, and/or shared with members, keeping dollars circulating in the local economy.



## Choose from these types of co-operatives

Co-ops fall under different categories:

- **Producer co-ops** are owned and controlled by producers who sell their product through the co-op, like an agricultural co-op run by farmers.
- **Consumer co-ops** are owned and controlled by their consumer members who shop at the co-op, like a gas station or grocery store.
- **Worker co-ops** are owned and operated by people who work at the co-op. Worker co-ops can operate in any sector of the economy and range from manufacturing to restaurants to childcare.
- **Non profit community service co-ops** provide services on a not for profit basis, for example a child care centre owned and operated by the parents using the centre.
- **Housing co-ops** are owned and managed by their residents.

## Multi-stakeholder Co-ops

The Manitoba government has amended *The Co-operatives Act* so groups that normally form separate co-ops, such as workers and consumers, can combine their resources and create a co-op together.

This allows co-ops greater strength and sustainability through the ability to diversify their stakeholders.

## Many Co-operatives Many Benefits

- Shop at worker co-operatives – this sustains jobs that return money back into the local economy.
- Join a consumer co-operative – using a local business retains nearly twice as many dollars in the community as buying from non local sources.
- Buy goods made from producer co-operatives – your purchases directly affect the viability of Manitoba's farmers.
- Consider a housing co-operative – your next move could be one of the most affordable you've ever made.
- Consider a credit union for your financial institution for a stronger investment in Manitoba.

