

Dear NCBA Board and Members,

I am running for the Board of Directors of NCBA CLUSA because I believe deeply in the organization's work 'harnessing the uncommon power of common purpose.' As Executive Director of the US Federation of Worker Cooperatives, part of my role is to connect our members to other cooperative sectors, and to work together to grow the cooperative economy in the United States. I hope to bring worker cooperatives more closely into this cross-sectoral work at NCBA, at a time of great promise and opportunity for all cooperatives.

In 2005, I was the first staff person hired by the newly-formed US Federation of Worker Cooperatives. Joining NCBA was one of the first things we did as an organization because we affirmed the value of cross-sectoral work. Over the past decade, I have watched the phenomenal growth and organizing in the worker cooperative sector. At the same time, I have helped steward our organization's expansion. The USFWC has grown from a handful of visionary founding members to a roomful of engaged member workplaces representing thousands of worker-owners and their supporters. We have built full staffing and a budget to match. As we have grown, our capacity to participate in cooperative movement-building has also increased.

Our dynamic members have been critical to the formation of local and regional intersectoral cooperative associations across the country: the Austin Cooperative Business Association, Valley Cooperative Business Association, SLICE in Seattle, Dane Cooperative Alliance in Madison, and the Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance, to name only a few. They have formed member councils to support industry/sector alliances and to work with unions. Organizationally, the USFWC works with cooperative development centers across the country, and with partners in the nonprofit sector and New Economy movements to promote worker-ownership as a tool for economic justice.

The USFWC also participates actively at the international level in the International Cooperative Alliance. Our President sits on the Executive Committee of its worker cooperative sectoral group, CICOPA, and serves as Vice-President of CICOPA-Americas. We have strong working relationships with worker cooperative organizations in Canada, Europe, Japan and the Mercosur countries.

Worker cooperatives are a diverse and growing part of the cooperative economy and an important messenger of cooperative principles and values. With our increased capacity and expansive vision, this is a critical moment to represent our growing sector within the larger national cooperative movement, and to build real economic and working bonds between sectors. My broad experience working in cooperatives, as a cooperative developer, as the grassroots leader of a national organization, and in Board service for two other national cooperative organizations, will help me effectively undertake this work. I hope to have the opportunity to do so as a Board member of NCBA CLUSA.

Sincerely,
Melissa Hoover