



U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives
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USFWC



NEWS

UPDATES FROM THE U.S. FEDERATION OF WORKER COOPERATIVES

SPRING/SUMMER 2017

SANCTUARY ACROSS THE U.S. *by Ana Martina Rivas*

Cooperatives working together for the rights of immigrant workers and beyond

The USFWC, in collaboration with the Democracy at Work Institute, has launched the Sanctuary Workplaces campaign through an online platform. This project takes inspiration from the courageous responses that many organizers and activist all across the country are articulating in a strategy to expand Sanctuaries to keep our communities safe.

We feel very connected with the political vision that is building with a diverse community across the country—our cooperative movement is committed to expand sanctuary among

democratic workplaces. Sanctuary Workplaces are hate-free zones that intend to be safe spaces for our communities. They are spaces where worker-owners and employees are empowered knowing their workplace rights as workers and owners.

The online platform offers a directory of organizations that offer legal assistance, organizations developing sanctuary resources, a “Know Your Rights” section, strategizes to Expand Sanctuary workplaces and hate free zones. We also recommend to visit



Pictured: New Era Windows Cooperative in Chicago

sanctuaryrestaurants.org
a national campaign to expand sanctuary to restaurants launched by Restaurant

Opportunities Center in collaboration with presente.org who also participated organizing immigrant workers strikes.

RESOURCES TO CREATE HATE FREE ZONES FOR WORKER-OWNERS AND EMPLOYEES SANCTUARYWORKPLACES.INFO

IN LOVING MEMORY OF FRANK ADAMS

by Esteban Kelly

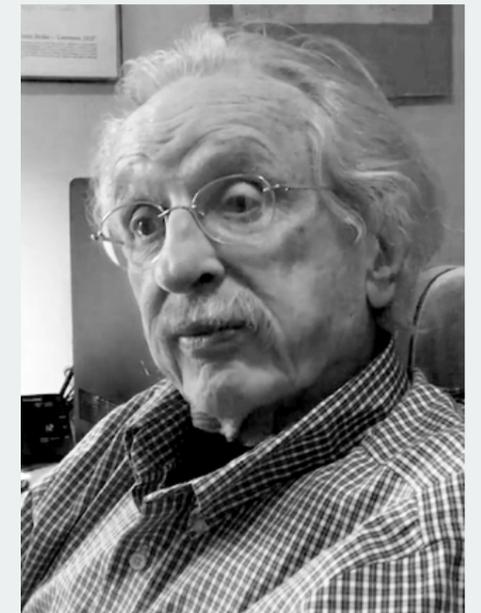
I was surprised and saddened last March, to learn that one of our staunch leaders and founders, Frank Adams passed away. We posted an obituary in honor of Frank at www.usworker.coop, but his legacy bears mentioning here as well.

Frank was not a typical leader. Cantankerous and wise, he nurtured some of our sector’s burgeoning leadership by encouraging pedagogical experimentation and rigorous learning. I first met Frank at the age of 23, when I was invited to be his co-panelist during the founding conference of the USFWC. The organizers wanted to pair youth and elders in a conversation about worker ownership

and mentorship. I didn’t know much about his contributions then, but recall being humbled in his presence.

I never imagined then that I would be reminiscing about Frank as the USFWC’s Executive Director, but he is one of the reasons why we even have a sector to speak of. He was, in many ways like a godfather of the modern worker co-op movement in the US, and will be remembered as such.

Read Rebecca Bauen’s reflection on Frank’s life and work at:
usworker.coop/blog/in-memory-of-frank-adams/



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A NEW CHAPTER FOR THE USFWC *by Esteban Kelly*

It is my pleasure to officially introduce our new staff team. In the wake of Amy Johnson's resignation we've expanded and reorganized our staffing plan. Our newest hire is the multi-talented Mo Manklang, who joins us as our first ever Communications Director. We now have 4 full-time-equivalent staff in Philadelphia, supported by Foresta as our half-time Operations Manager in Oakland. Many of you have had a chance to meet our Membership Director, Ana Martina who started at the USFWC last summer. Our new team will be visiting more parts of the country, including rural members and a 2017 road show—let us know if you'd like a training or a presentation to your co-workers or board about USFWC's revamped member benefits and programs.



Esteban with MADWORC workers in WI

U.S. who are faced with similar threats in their industry or in their communities, and advises the USFWC and DAWI on how best to resource and protect immigrant communities. With their support we launched the Sanctuary Workplaces campaign on May Day 2017, promoting an expanded definition of sanctuary for Black Lives, Muslim communities, and other targeted populations.

Our programs and advocacy are fueled by the active involvement of workers like you. That's why we are creating more opportunities for members to learn from one another through member councils as well as peer networks—like the new conversions peer network

launching in summer of 2017, and a network for the largest and more successful worker co-ops in the country.

By remaining connected to your stories and your voice, we are able to push forward changes in public policy and in the field, especially in partnership with the Democracy At Work Institute, with whom we are working more closely than ever. Look forward to more regular updates on our advocacy efforts with cities, regions, and even US congress members through our online platforms.

Esteban

P.S. Have questions or thoughts? Contact me at esteban@usworker.coop

DRINK COFFEE, SUPPORT IMMIGRANT WORKERS



In partnership with Thread Coffee in Baltimore, Maryland, we now have a limited edition coffee roast. Proceeds from the sale of this coffee blend go toward our work with our Concilio de Miembros Asesores de Cooperativas Inmigrantes (Member Advisory Council of Immigrant Cooperatives).

You can buy the Ring of Fire Roast at <http://bit.ly/ringoffireroast>



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EXPAND YOUR WORKER CO-OP, LEVERAGE YOUR EXPERIENCE: LESSONS FROM CHILDSPACE

by Mo Manklang

Childspace, a worker co-op in Philadelphia, has almost 30 years under its belt serving 20 children aged three months through sixth grade, and was created out of a desire to create better quality jobs in day care.

Over the last few decades, Childspace has built their business on not just childcare, but also advocating in the community for workers rights, leadership development, and consulting. With a constant eye on looking at opportunities to bring in alternative funding streams, the staff has successfully leveraged state, federal, private fees, grants, and other fundraising efforts.

In the spirit of creating a high-quality staff force with low turnover, Childspace makes sure to offer opportunities to develop business skills to its workers, supplemented by government grants like the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant, which funds students in high-

need fields in low-income areas. In an industry that is traditionally low wage and high turnover, this has become a key benefit to ensure a strong workforce.

"Be at the table. Make sure to be in the room where things happen"
 - Susan Kavchok

In turn, Childspace has used their experience to become thought leaders in their industry, training like-minded worker cooperatives, childcare centers and even government entities.

Susan Kavchok, one of the founders, noted that Childspace has been able to diversify their revenue while also supporting the cooperative movement. Turning the solitary nature of their business model in the childcare field into a chance to bring in funds and grow worker co-ops in their sector, the takeaway is: keep an eye open to opportunities as you grow.

NOW AVAILABLE: RISE UP

Build your movement and beat the system in Rise Up, TESA Collective's new board game. TESA has launched Rise Up: The Game of People and Power, a game about social movements and what it takes to win, even when the cards are stacked against us.



Photo credit Molly McLeod

Nearly 100% of the production costs are going to worker-owned companies.

BUY THE GAME AT [BIT.LY/BUYRISEUP](http://bit.ly/buyriseup)

SECTOR SPOTLIGHT: TAXI CO-OPS



WHERE YOU CAN HAIL A CO-OP TAXI

NAME	LOCATION	FOUNDED
Union Cab	Madison, WI	1979
Alexandria Union Cab	Alexandria, VA	2009
SF Green Cab	San Francisco, CA	2007
Alliance Taxi Co-op	Philadelphia, PA	2015
Union Taxi Co-op	Denver, CO	2009
Green Taxi Co-op	Denver, CO	2015
North Bay Taxi Co-op	Marin County, CA	2001
Union Cab	Portland, OR	2013
ATX Co-op Taxi	Austin, TX	2011

ABOUT WORKER CO-OP TAXIS

Between 2007 – 2015, five new worker cooperatives have started and a sixth is in the works. Altogether, 930 workers were employed at worker co-op taxi companies as of May 2015.

With 260 workers and \$6.7 million in annual revenue, Union Cab is the largest worker cooperative taxi service in the U.S. outside of Denver. It earned a 3% profit margin in 2013, a typical rate compared to the industry. Like many of the current taxi cooperative efforts, Union Cab was born out of labor struggle, including two strikes against a traditional taxi service. After several years of expansion-related difficulties in 1970s and 1980s, Union Cab has emerged to become the city's market leader, exceeding two conventional competitors in terms of annual passengers and annual trips.

Policy & Advocacy Council

For those interested in organizing local, state, and national policy and advocacy campaigns to advance workplace democracy

Regional efforts to affect policy have been moving across the country, including Boston, Philadelphia, Austin and Milwaukee. Listen to our webinar on current policy efforts at usworker.coop/blog/may-2017-policy-webinar

Racial and Economic Justice Council

A new council established in 2016, responsible for connecting worker ownership and USFWC members to larger movements for racial and economic justice

Read the Statement of Purpose: <http://bit.ly/usfwcREJstatement>

Immigrant Worker Co-ops / Concilio de Miembros Asesores de Cooperativas Inmigrantes

Led by Spanish-speaking members, focused on language justice and access, full member participation and leadership, and strategic national partnerships

See Ana Martina's writeup of the Sanctuary Workplaces website for resources on the front page.

Union Co-ops Council

For those interested in and actively working to connect workplace democracy and organized labor

See an overview of the case for unions and worker co-op support to the right >

UNIONS & THE WORKER CO-OP MOVEMENT

A look at why it benefits these movements to support each other

Why unions are interested in worker co-ops?

- Adds to labor union membership
- Allows the labor force to respond to economic downturns with flexibility by decreasing workload and pay rather than laying people off
- Workers are empowered through ownership & control of management
- Businesses are less susceptible to attack / decimation fr/ capital
- Builds member wealth in the form of enterprise ownership and sustainable wages
- Helps redirect labor unions toward more democratic practices
- Involves organized labor in constructive vs resistance work

Why are worker co-ops interested in unions?

- Immerses workers in broad and deep economic analysis
- Encourages solidarity with the union movement in advocacy on workers rights
- May offer benefits through the union
- Provides research and organizing expertise, and capital for co-op formation
- Provides model collective bargaining agreements, operating procedures and rules, and grievance procedures with neutral facilitators
- Provides solidarity purchasing arrangements

Keep up with this council at usworker.coop/unioncoops

SHIFT CHANGE: PUTTING DEMOCRACY TO WORK



From member organization **Moving Images**, this film tells the little known stories of employee-owned businesses that compete successfully in today's economy while providing secure, dignified jobs in democratic workplaces. Film by Melissa Young and Mark Dworkin.

Shift Change, as well as the documentary WEconomics about cooperative business in Italy, is available in English versions in pay per view [\$5 for Shift Change, and \$3 for Weconomics] at https://vimeo.com/bullfrogfilms/vod_pages, and Spanish on DVD for \$25 including shipping.

GOLDEN STEPS

Members of Golden Steps have been active this year. They took on the streets and joined the NDWA at the Women's March and got featured in an article in the New Yorker. They also have been growing, they now have 14 working members and are onboarding 18 new candidates.



They started their candidacy process on March 20, 2017 with a workshop on what are worker coops. The 6-month process will include trainings on Alzheimers', nutrition, emergency response, CPR, conflict resolution and more.



GREAT SKY SOLAR WINS BEST FOR BOSTON

Congrats to **Great Sky Solar** for winning Boston Magazine's BEST OF BOSTON 2017 award for Best Solar Design



COOPERATION WORCESTER FORMS IN MA by Julius Jones

A group of Worcester worker owners (pictured, right) from 9 worker co-ops, 5 non-profit organizations, and public partners are working together to engage anchor institutions in intentional local spending, a project they're calling Cooperation Worcester. The group is multi-stakeholder, and at the same time, centrally organized by and for grassroots folks. They did research and discovered that Worcester has about 1152 non-profit organizations. There are \$6.5 Billion dollars in income among these organizations, by one agency's estimate. What has emerged is a vibrant community conversation around how they can leverage the purchasing power of these nonprofits in Worcester to be in service to their community and fuel the cooperative movement with local funding.

The project in its entirety is an exercise in self-governance, community decision making, planning, and building power. They are intersectional in their organizing, adopting the philosophy as a framework, and analytic tool, to both address problems, and embrace the opportunities of their diversity. We are excited about what is happening, and the generative possibilities for the future.

Read more at www.worcesterroots.org/2017/03/24/cooperation-worcester



INT'L NEWS FROM CICOPA

For the past several years, the level of youth unemployment in the world has increased to alarming levels. At the same time, young people around the globe have been expressing increasing dissatisfaction about mainstream economic governance and an increasing interest for cooperatives, in a quest for more democracy and transparency.

Cooperatives are a way to own and manage enterprises democratically: everyone's voice is heard and everyone's wellbeing is considered.

The WE OWN IT! campaign seeks to inspire the next generation to create more equal, fulfilling and caring workplaces through cooperatives. This campaign is funded by supporters all

around the globe. From national organizations representing cooperatives in Argentina, Italy, the UK, Korea...to cooperative enterprises and groups like the Mondragon Corporation in Spain, The Co-operators in Canada and Ecosviluppo in Italy.

We own it! is a one year campaign that aims to spread stories about cooperatives and cooperators to young people around the world. The goal is to inspire the next generation to create more caring, cooperative jobs and enterprises run by and for people.

CICOPA has already collected €32,400 from 22 organizations and individuals that have already shown their commitment to making it real, with a target of 70,000 Euro.



At Wegner CPAs, we have a dedicated, expert team that serves cooperative clients exclusively, providing a range of specialized professional services to help them maintain solid financial footing. Learn more and view our resources for cooperatives at wegnercpas.com/industries/cooperatives.



WORKER COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT AT THE WORLD MEETING OF POPULAR MOVEMENTS

"Now we must all become disrupters. We must disrupt those who would seek to send troops into our communities to deport the undocumented, to destroy our families. We must disrupt those who portray refugees as enemies. We must disrupt those who train us to see Muslim men & women as a source of threat rather than children of God. We must disrupt those who would take away healthcare, who would take food from our children. But we can't just be disrupters, we have to be rebuilders. We have to rebuild a nation in which all of us are children of one God...We must rebuild a nation that pays \$15 and provide decent housing and work to all.

If work is co-creation with God don't we think it deserves at least \$15 an hour?"

- Bishop Robert McElroy, Los Angeles

In February 2017, DAWI and USFWC staff and Board members attended the World Meeting of Popular Movements in Modesto, CA, alongside several USFWC members from Teamworks, Opportunity Threads, Center for Family Life, Beyond Care, and The Working World. They joined over 600 grassroots popular movement leaders from dozens of organizing groups and communities in the US and 12 countries, working to address the "economy of exclusion and inequality" by working for structural changes that promote social, economic and racial justice.

This gathering, put together by the PICO community organizing network and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, is the continuation of a series of World Meetings that have taken place so far in Bolivia and the Vatican.

DAWI/USFWC staff served on the planning committee, and together our organizations represented worker cooperatives and made connections to community organizing and immigrants' rights groups. DAWI Board chair and former USFWC Board member Molly Hemstreet from Opportunity Threads gave an opening address, sharing her story, and the story of "small industrial shops, with workers of all backgrounds, across our region are asking how to convert their shops to be worker-owned. Together we are building an economy for everyone—

one industrial plant at a time." In a letter of support to the gathering, Pope Francis urged participants to fight "the invisible tyranny of money that only guarantees the privileges of a few" and offered encouragement and support. "I know that you have committed yourselves to fight for social justice, to defend our Sister Mother Earth and to stand alongside migrants. I want to reaffirm your choice," he wrote.

by *Melissa Hoover*

THE ATTENDEE CREATED "MESSAGE FROM MODESTO" CALLS FOR A SERIES OF ACTIONS TO FOLLOW UP

1. Sanctuary
2. Disrupting oppression and dehumanization
3. Bold prophetic leadership from faith communities
4. One People, One Fight
5. International Week of Action May 1-7, 2017
6. State and regional meetings of popular movements
7. Popular education
8. Political power

Read more at popularmovements.org/news/message-from-modesto

For more information about the World Meeting of Popular Movements, including livestream of the event, visit popularmovements.org



Opportunity Threads worker-owner Molly Hemstreet speaking at the World Meeting of Popular Movements in Modesto, CA

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FROM THE DEMOCRACY AT WORK INSTITUTE

This year DAWI and USFWC are working together more than ever. We are training USFWC members and peer advisors, building new markets for worker cooperatives, sharing learnings from successful worker coops, and building new movement infrastructure like chapters.

LÍDERES COOPERATIVISTAS EN ACCIÓN

Member Council of USFWC forms with DAWI training and support



The fastest growing sector in the past 10 years of worker cooperatives are immigrant-led and Spanish-speaking. There has been an overwhelming interest among these worker owners to connect with one another. DAWI/USFWC's Líderes Cooperativistas en Acción (LCA) training program lays a foundation to build relationships, shape a common vision for working together, and share skills among immigrant-led co-

operatives. Meeting online and in person, the cohort of 13 worker-owners have begun to build and strengthen their consultation skills and are evolving into trained peer advisers that support their own businesses and meet the growing need for assistance in startups, mature cooperatives, and conversions. Contact: Vanessa Bransburg at vbransburg@institute.coop.



NEW TOOLS FOR WORKER COOPERATIVES!

What do you want to learn?

The Democracy at Work Institute has developed a series of short video courses on the following topics.

Check them out, refresh your skills, learn something new, and use them to train your new members.

- Startup (y en Español)
- Conversions
- Cooperative development (y en Español)
- Communications (y en Español)
- Personnel (y en Español)
- Finance
- Governance

The courses include self-guided videos and other resources.

To see the full listing of courses, go to courses.institute.coop.

Courses are free for members of the USFWC!

To access courses as a USFWC member, contact membership@usworker.coop. Courses on the topics of finance, governance, and conversions will be released in Spanish in Summer 2017.

PRINCIPLE 6 IN ACTION:

We're launching a cooperative-driven value chain project in textiles

In the spirit of the internationally-recognized Principle 6, "cooperation among cooperatives," the Democracy at Work Institute is rolling out a program to bring business to new and existing worker cooperatives in the garment and textile industry. The pilot program started with an order from Park Slope Food Coop for 10,000 tote bags cut and sewn by Opportunity Threads and printed by Luv Custom Prints. Recently we supported the launch of Rebel Threads, the startup screenprinting cooperative by the Florida Dream Defenders, financed by the Southern Reparations Loan Fund. Our idea is to develop a

coop-driven value chain that develops business relationships between coops, and we help build these markets. Then these relationships can be used to help new coops get started, and we provide some basic technical assistance to those startups. If successful, we hope this project can be a model for cooperative business development and mutual assistance in other sectors. We are looking to bring other cooperative development projects that relate to the textile industry nationwide into the network.

Contact: Anh-Thu Nguyen, atnguyen@institute.coop.

THE CHAPTER NETWORK FELLOWSHIP: GROWING LOCAL MOVEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

USFWC and DAWI are collaborating to run a 6-month fellowship program to help launch local chapters. We have recruited staff and members from 6 areas: Boston, Philadelphia, the Bay Area, New York City, Baltimore

and Maine. Fellows are meeting online and in person to develop business plans, ecosystem analysis, organizing strategies, and project plans.



2017 Staff and Fellows: From left to right: Roodline Volcy, Robert, Ellie, Jamila Medley, Zen Trenholm, Adrianna, Tammy, Maya, Saduf, Rebecca Bauen, Heather, Jonah Fertig, Mo Manklang, Esteban Kelly, Ro, Ana Martina Rivas