

**FUNDING THE FUTURE  
COOPERATIVE FUND  
OF THE NORTHEAST**

## Worker Cooperative Conversions in the Northeast



[www.cooperativefund.org/conversions](http://www.cooperativefund.org/conversions)

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## Ward Lumber Jay , NY

[wardlumber.com](http://wardlumber.com)

Cooperative since 2021



[image source](#)

"Rather than choose liquidation or selling to some other business that would change the culture, I wanted to look at employee ownership. [It] vests the control of the company in the hands of the people that work it every day, who live in the communities that we serve, and have that vested interest in ownership."

Jay Ward

Ward Lumber was founded in 1890 and family-owned for four generations. The selling owner was interested in a culture of shared ownership for decades, and introduced open book practices. He saw an opportunity to take the idea further, after his children expressed interest in other career paths, by selling the business to the employees and staying on as a transitional general manager for a number of years.

The 50 employees are in two locations, Jay and Malone, New York, small towns in the Adirondack mountains of northern New York. They anchor the local construction economy. The company also is an active member of LBM advantage, a 1,100 member lumber supply buying cooperative.

The transition to a cooperative drew government support. The company applied for and received a grant of \$250,000 from New York's Regional Economic Development Council that helped lower the purchase price. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, who co-authored the Main Street Employee Ownership Act has visited the cooperative to express support.

The employees' first year as owners was a boom time for residential construction and building supply, offering a crash course in supply chain issues and market fluctuations that they will need to navigate in their new roles.

- [Senator Gillibrand – Gillibrand Celebrates Ward Lumber's Transition At 'Board' Cutting Ceremony \(2021\)](#)
- [CDI – Ward Lumber Transitions to Employee Ownership \(2021\)](#)
- [Adirondack Almanack – In historic move, Ward Lumber transitions ownership to cooperative \(2021\)](#)
- [Press Republican – Senator Gillibrand, local leader, tout employee co-op at Ward Lumber \(2021\)](#)
- [NCPR – Employees officially take charge at North Country's largest worker-owned co-operative \(2021\)](#)
- [ANCA – Ward Lumber Becomes Worker-owned Cooperative \[video\] \(2021\)](#)
- [The Sun – For employees, a good time to own a lumber yard \(2021\)](#)
- [Adirondack Daily Enterprise – Worker-owned cooperative is first of its kind in the region \(2021\)](#)
- [The Sun – Ward Lumber completes historic transition to employee ownership \(2021\)](#)
- [CDI – CDI's Business Ownership Solutions Visits the Adirondack North Country \(2019\)](#)



## White Electric Coffee Providence, RI

[whiteelectriccoffee.com](http://whiteelectriccoffee.com)

Cooperative since 2021



[Image from Mindy Stock](#)

"It's about having a meaningful impact in your workplace, having an actual voice and an actual say in how your workplace should be run. We live in a democracy. We vote for our representatives, we vote for senators, we vote for a president and why can't we do the same thing at work?"

Danny Cordova

White Electric Coffee was founded in 2000 and grew to become a popular neighborhood destination. It was sold in 2007 to a new owner. In 2020, in response to worker organizing efforts, it was put on the market and purchased by eight employees as a cooperative.

Moved by the social uprisings related to George Floyd's murder, current and past employees had initially drafted a letter of demands for the owner to increase diversity in hiring, as well as improve working conditions and customer accessibility. The store was closed and signers were laid off. They won back their jobs with a community-based campaign and began to organize a union. Immediately after unionization, the business was listed for sale.

The group's public awareness campaign during the conflict translated into successful crowdfunding to raise capital in order to leverage a loan for the purchase.

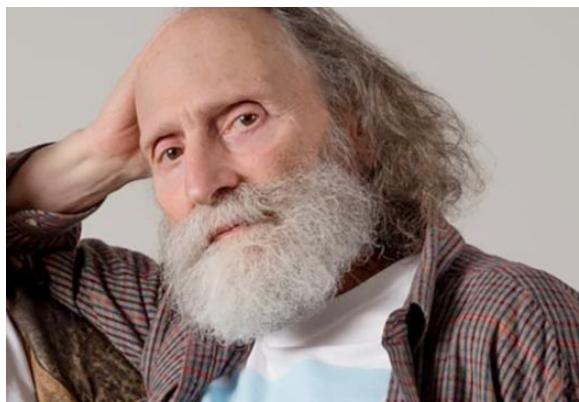
Since they began organizing together, the group has met many of the demands made in their original letter, including hiring more workers of color, paying for anti-racism trainings, and increasing wages and benefits for workers.

- [In These Times – When These Workers Unionized, Their Cafe Was Put Up for Sale So They Bought It \(2021\)](#)
- [WBNA – Local Business Spotlight: White Electric Coffee \(2021\)](#)
- [Urban Greens Co-op Market – A Coffee Conversation \[video\] \(2021\)](#)
- [Local Return – Community Conversation with Chloe Chassaing \[video\] \(2021\)](#)
- [Boston Globe – White Electric reopens as Rhode Island's only cooperatively run coffee shop \(2021\)](#)
- [Rhode Island Monthly – The Story Behind White Electric Coffee's Move to a Cooperative Model \(2021\)](#)
- [Providence Journal – White Electric coffee purchased by worker-owned cooperative \(2021\)](#)
- [Uprise RI – CUPS organizing story: From unionization to worker-owned co-op café \(2021\)](#)
- [Gofundme – Help Make a Worker Co-op Cafe in Providence! \(2020\)](#)
- [Uprise RI – RI's first unionized coffee shop needs your support to become worker-owned \(2020\)](#)
- [Employee group – Letter to White Electric Coffee \(2020\)](#)

## Liberty Graphics Liberty, ME

[lgtees.com](https://lgtees.com)

Cooperative since 2021



[image source](#)

"The spirit is here. I believe it will continue to produce some of the finest t-shirts in the country"

Tom Opper

"He knows the employees care about the final product and are vested in the company. From his perspective, it is a good decision."

Sam Bartlett

Liberty Graphics grew from a 1970s gig producing t-shirts for local celebrations to a nationally renowned environmental innovator, selling to the American Museum of Natural History and the Nature Company.

The company's brand reputation and ecological practices would have value to a buyer, but an outside acquisition would likely have resulted in production being relocated with a loss of employment for long-time employees. An internal sale maintained jobs and their interwoven community connections.

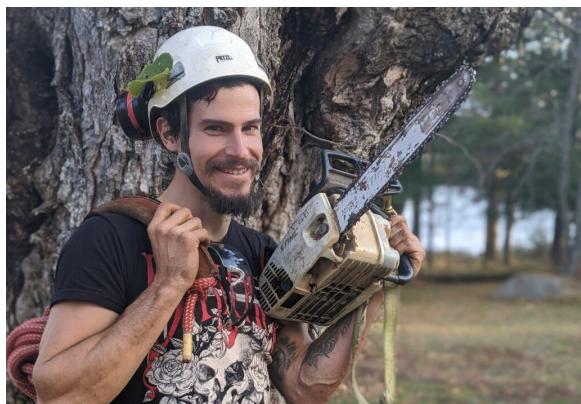
Twenty employees bought in as founding members of the cooperative. More than half of them had been working there for more than 25 years. The shop uses non-toxic inks which are better for workers' health and better for the environment.

The sale included the printing operations, but did not include the t-shirt manufacturing side of the business, which will remain as a supplier to the cooperative.

- [DownEast – The Next Chapter for Maine's Storied Liberty Graphics \(2021\)](#)
- [WABI – 43-year-old t-shirt graphic company purchased by employees \(2021\)](#)
- [Penobscot Bay Pilot – Maine T-shirt company purchased by employees \(2021\)](#)
- [Republican Journal – Liberty Graphics purchased by employees \(2021\)](#)
- [Bangor Daily News – Employees purchase iconic Maine T-shirt company \(2021\)](#)

## More Trees Arborists Troy, NY

[moretrees.coop](http://moretrees.coop)  
Cooperative since 2020



[image source](#)

"We're learning as we go. I'm a really good worker, I show up and get the work done. But I am having to learn more of the back-end things.

"The new aspects are interesting, challenging at times, and I am very grateful to have role models as my peers to do this alongside me."

Christian Grigoraskos

The founder of this tree care company built a culture of transparency and collaborative decision-making that attracted employees passionate about ecology. He transitioned it from sole proprietorship to a democratically owned LLC to formalize those practices as he looked towards the next chapter in his life.

The transition has included handing off typical small business owners' roles like customer relations, and writing estimates for potential jobs. The founder still does some independent consulting outside of the cooperative, which had been a smaller portion of the original company's revenue.

The cooperative launched during a boom year for arborists as a result of many people working from home and investing in their properties. Still, the company wants to grow slowly enough to keep their focus on offering the highest quality tree care.

- [Media Sanctuary – More Trees in the Capital Region \[audio\] \(2021\)](#)
- [Albany Law School – Clinic Helps Deep-Rooted Arborist Business Grow into Co-Op \(2020\)](#)

## Regenerative Design Group Greenfield, MA

[regenerativedesigngroup.com](http://regenerativedesigngroup.com)

Cooperative since 2020



image from Regenerative Design Group

"It feels timely to have completed our cooperative conversion in the strange year that was 2020, with its daily reminders of the need for authentic models of democracy, concern for community, and fair distribution of resources.

"Indeed, in a time when so many traditional sectors and businesses are struggling, worker-owned cooperatives prove to be resilient."

Regenerative Design Group

Regenerative Design Group (RDG) is a values-driven ecological design firm. Originally founded as a loose collaborative of individual designers, the firm eventually followed a more standard business model, albeit one that embodied cooperative values.

In their 10th year of business, the group decided to formally transition to employee ownership. In 2021 they have seven worker-owners and two new team members, with whom they are excited to share the benefits of ownership

- [Regenerative Design Group – We Are Worker-Owned! \(2021\)](http://regenerativedesigngroup.com)
- [Cooperative Development Institute – 2020 Year in Review \(2020\)](http://cooperativefund.org/conversions)

## Downtown Sounds Northampton, MA

[downtownsounds.com](http://downtownsounds.com)

Cooperative since 2019



[image source](#)

*"In a way, the closest thing I have to kids is the people who've been working for me for a long time."*

Joe Blumenthal

After almost four decades the owner began to prepare for retirement, including floating the idea of a cooperative to the employees, and hiring with the aim of building a succession team in mind.

While other downtown stores have closed with increased online sales, musical instrument buyers benefit from brick and mortar stores to test and feel the instruments. Alongside sales, customer relationships are strengthened with lessons and instrument maintenance.

The company has had a generation or more of students pass through their music lessons and who hold the store's place in the local fabric dear. As the sale approached they also offered a class of a non-voting preferred shares for community members to buy, following local precedent from Real Pickles buyout.

The cooperative's new co-owners are actively engaged to improve the business and its customer market. They have brought in a local business professor to design a phased transition plan, and have made changes for a more gender-inclusive store experience.

The seller will continue to own the building, but offer a right of first refusal to the cooperative in the case of a sale.

- [WHMP - Downtown Sounds Re-opens as New Workers Co-Op \[audio\] \(2019\)](#)
- [WRSI - Meet The New Bosses Around Downtown Sounds \[audio\] \(2019\)](#)
- [Daily Hampshire Gazette - Changing its tune: Downtown Sounds to become worker-owned \(2019\)](#)
- [Daily Hampshire Gazette - Hoping for good vibes for Northampton landmark Downtown Sounds \(2019\)](#)
- [WWLP - Downtown Sounds employees hope to keep business open as owner retires \[video\] \(2019\)](#)

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## Wheelers Insurance South Paris, ME

[wheelersinsurance.com](http://wheelersinsurance.com)

Cooperative since 2019



[image source](#)

"As a fifth-generation owner of this business, I was as much a steward of a family legacy as I was the owner of a corporation. Our mission was always to run a profitable, sustainable company that serves our owners', employees' and community's long-term best interests. I felt that cooperative ownership was an excellent way to continue that mission and let a 6th generation develop it."

Michael Newsom

Wheelers Insurance was founded in 1864 and was family-owned for five generations. The selling owner was concerned that a transition would result in loss of local control of staffing, wages and benefits and erosion of a family-friendly workplace culture.

To lay the groundwork for new roles and relationships, the company created a governing board of employees 3 years before the sale, offering employee board members real world training in stewardship of the business and oversight of the owner in his role as CEO.

The seller has spoken at legislative hearings to advocate for tax incentives for cooperative conversions to help foster a vibrant community of civic-minded business owners that has been dwindling in regional towns. He believes cooperative ownership will help refocus business practices on people and planet, not just profit.

- [Daily Yonder – Radically Rural: Keeping Rural Businesses Open Across Generations \(2020\)](#)
- [Press Herald – Make it easier for Maine workers to build wealth through ownership \(2020\)](#)
- [CDI – Leaving A Cooperative Legacy: After Five Generations, W.J. Wheeler Transitions \(2020\)](#)
- [Sun Journal – Measure urges more support for employee-owned companies \(2019\)](#)
- [NCEO – Maine Legislator Introduces Pro-Employee Ownership Bill \(2019\)](#)



## Rock City Coffee Rockland, ME

[rockcitycoffee.com](http://rockcitycoffee.com)

Cooperative since 2018



Image from Rock City Coffee

**"My crew, the average age is probably 35 years old. That's a fabulous age for an entrepreneur. They all have energy. They're all committed to Rockland. It's a great, great time. They are the future.**

**"None of my employees could have bought a business like Rock City on their own. Buying it as a group allowed them each to have ownership."**

Suzanne Ward

The owner of this 25-year old business was an early entrepreneur in the wave of coffee and espresso interest that has grown the market since the 1990s. The company roasted their own beans for wholesale, and became a Main Street institution along Mid-Coast Maine.

When her husband (and co-owner) passed away, the founder began thinking about succession. She wanted someone who would have the industry experience for continued success, and a commitment to the social impacts of the business.

Younger workers in the area often faced a tension: most wanted to root locally, but were tempted to move to larger towns for economic opportunity. Selling to a cooperative would reward those who chose to stay, and put the business in the hands of a buyer with intimate familiarity of the company.

To test the capacity of the transition team, the seller asked them to lead a crowdfunding campaign for an equipment upgrade, after the city requested they reduce emissions. They created videos and narrative for the campaigns and raised \$20,000.

Many workers used an SBA microloan program for their equity investment, and the cooperative set up payroll deductions and made monthly pass throughs seamlessly to the microlender.

- [Bloomberg – Retiring Boomers Turn to Co-Ops to Keep Their Businesses Running \(2020\)](#)
- [CDI – The Rock City Roasters and Cafe Story \[video\] \(2018\)](#)
- [Bangor Daily News – What happened after 17 employees took over a beloved Maine business \(2018\)](#)
- [Daily Coffee News – Rock City Coffee Roasters in Maine Is Now a Worker-Owned Cooperative \(2018\)](#)
- [Courier Gazette – Rock City Coffee workers to become business owners \(2018\)](#)
- [WABI – From employees to owners, Rock City in Rockland gains new ownership \(2018\)](#)
- [Free Press – Rock City Coffee Officially Becomes a Worker Cooperative \(2018\)](#)
- [Shelterforce – The Next Boom for Worker Co-ops? \(2016\)](#)
- [Indigogo – Rock City Coffee – We Need a New Roaster! \(2016\)](#)

## Ewing Controls Greenfield, MA

[ewingcontrols.com](http://ewingcontrols.com)

Cooperative since 2017



[image source](#)

"It was very much a business decision. We were concerned about what would happen when we eventually retire. Employees are our only asset, really. This is the perfect way to keep them engaged.

"One of the things I'm most proud of is the employees have been here a long time. We have a really good team here with good working relationships. That made the conversion easier, because everyone trusts each other."

Tom Ewing

After 16 years, the two owners of this turbine control manufacturer were preparing to retire. They were concerned that an outside purchase would put jobs at risk, and chose to sell to their 11 employees as a cooperative.

No immediate management changes were made as part of the sale, though the worker-owners began overseeing management in a new way through an elected board of directors.

A feasibility study for the transition was subsidized by a Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation grant for small business retention.

- [Home Care – Moving to an Employee Ownership Model \(2018\)](#)
- [Greenfield Recorder – Greenfield's Ewing Controls invests in itself as it takes on international projects \(2017\)](#)

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## Earth Designs Cooperative Rosendale, NY

[earthdesignscooperative.com](http://earthdesignscooperative.com)

Cooperative since 2016



image from Earth Designs

"Becoming a worker cooperative brought new job responsibilities as we restructured the business to support and encourage growth. We connected with the pride that comes with ownership, the sense of shared responsibility, and the growth that follows the challenges of democratic decision making."

Erin Domagal  
Former Creative Director

The founder of this ecological landscaping company decided to transition to a cooperative to more broadly share the responsibilities of ownership as the business grew. She stayed on as a general manager and lead designer for several years before returning to a solo consulting practice.

After the company became a cooperative the staff and revenue have more than tripled, and the cooperative is relocating, having outgrown its nursery and office space.

In growth, the cooperative has had to create leadership and management roles that didn't previously exist. While still design-centered, logistics for project managing multiple sites has become increasing important to the company's success.

- [Edible Hudson Valley - Cooperating with Your Land \(2021\)](#)
- [Bloomberg – Retiring Boomers Turn to Co-Ops to Keep Their Businesses Running \(2020\)](#)
- [Next Stop Now – Earth Designs Worker-Owned Cooperative \[audio\] \(2019\)](#)
- [Pathways to Ownership Case Study – Earth Designs \[webinar\] \(2018\)](#)
- [i want what SHE has – Working Cooperatively and Protecting our Lands and Water \[audio\] \(2018\)](#)
- [CDI – Converting a Young Business – Erin Domagal's Story \(2017\)](#)
- [CDI – Earth Designs Cooperative Plans for Growth through Employee Ownership \(2016\)](#)



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## New Frameworks Burlington, VT

[newframeworks.com](http://newframeworks.com)

Cooperative since 2016



image from New Frameworks

**"We're looking for a just and free transition. We cannot wait for the government to do things for us. Our jobs are not going to last forever. So we need to change the strategy of the work that we do."**

José Ignacio

The founder of the company had worked installing tile and ventilation systems, alongside studying alternative economics as the Institute for Social Ecology. He reorganized the company to create a path for the team of builders to become owners ten years in.

The cooperative has worked with local farms to build sustainable, on-farm housing for migrant laborers. The work designs for climate justice and response, and gathers feedback on designs from the farm workers.

A core value of the company has been to hire and train for diversity, including building representation in the industry of transgender people, people of color and women.

- [Seven Days - New Frameworks Constructs Healthier Environments — in the Workplace and Beyond \(2021\)](#)
- [WCAX - A look inside one of Vermont's greenest homes \[video\] \(2021\)](#)
- [Energy News Network - In Vermont, a new model emerges to improve migrant farmworker housing \(2021\)](#)
- [Fine Homebuilding - Pro Talk With Sustainable Builder Jacob Racusin \[video\] \(2021\)](#)
- [Fine Homebuilding - Keep Craft Alive: Ace McArleton, General Manager \(2020\)](#)
- [JLC - Fighting Climate Change With Straw Panels \(2020\)](#)
- [Fine Homebuilding - Home and Barn: A Natural Build \(2020\)](#)
- [Zillow - New Frameworks: Building Earth-Friendly Homes While Shaping a Better Future \(2017\)](#)
- [Zillow - Home Makers: New Frameworks \[video\] \(2016\)](#)



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## TimberHomes Vershire, VT

[timberhomesllc.com](http://timberhomesllc.com)

Cooperative since 2016



Image from TimberHomes

"We weren't really prepared as a company for [two veteran workers' departure] to happen. The question of employee ownership for Timber Homes had been out there for a couple of years. All of a sudden it became very relevant."

Shannon McIntyre

TimberHomes is a timber framing company in Central Vermont, which had been run with a cooperative spirit, but without a cooperative decision making or legal structure, since its beginning in 2006. In 2015, one of the partners and another key employee both left the company. The remaining partners wanted to re-envision the company as one where retaining good people was a primary goal.

The business structure and narrative were changed, giving employees a path to ownership over three years. While some workers still come and go, people start working at TimberHomes knowing that if the fit is right, they could be sitting in partner meetings – committed, responsible, and a beneficiary, in an entirely different way than most other companies.

The company has grown to have nine employee owners, and eight additional employees who are in their initial employment period. The switch to a cooperative business structure and the growth in employee owners inspires the group to work harder on building decision-making structures that formalize a culture where people have control over how their work gets done. The employee owners find it an intensely interesting process, and the initial goal of keeping good people has been met.

- [Letsgo.coop – Timber Homes Vermont \(2019\)](#)
- [VEOC – Timber Homes Vermont's Transition to Employee Ownership \[video\] \(2016\)](#)
- [Timber Homes – TimberHomes Vermont Expands Its Coop Focus \(2016\)](#)
- [TimberHomes: A Vermont Timber Frame Company \[video\] \(2015\)](#)
- [Round Sky Solutions – Case Study: Timber Homes LLC \(2012\)](#)



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## New School of Montpelier Montpelier, VT

[nsmvt.org](http://nsmvt.org)

Cooperative since 2015



[image source](#)

"It's a really hard job. Often times people don't stick around very long. But as soon as we started talking about owning the company ourselves and having little more say in how it goes, people really do stick around. And people start taking ownership for the company in thinking about new business ideas and new things we can do to improve."

Elias Gardner

The founder of a school that serves students with severe disabilities was looking ahead to new entrepreneurial projects after ten years. Seeking an option that ensured the highest quality service, she sold to the buyers she knew had deep mission alignment: the teachers and staff.

At its founding, 37 of 38 eligible employees joined. The seller stayed on for two years to ease the transition before exiting. The school is the largest worker cooperative in Vermont, and one of only a few worker-owned schools in the U.S.

Revenue for the school comes from the state, based on enrollment, so the new owners have the students and their parents as customers, but also state regulators. A renewal a year after the transition called the cooperative "highly unusual yet apparently quite effective."

- [Project Equity – Financing Case Study: New School of Montpelier \(2016\)](#)
- [VEOC – Elias Gardner on the New School of Montpelier Becoming a Worker Co-op \[video\] \(2016\)](#)
- [Vermont State Board of Education – Special Education Independent School Renewal \(2016\)](#)
- [VT Digger – Employees Purchase The New School Of Montpelier From Founder \(2015\)](#)
- [Vermont Business – Employees purchase The New School of Montpelier as a worker cooperative \(2015\)](#)



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## Real Pickles Greenfield, MA

[realpickles.com](http://realpickles.com)  
Cooperative since 2013



image from Real Pickles

**"If we are to really change the food system, and our society as a whole, we need lots of small, mission-oriented businesses. And we need them to stay small."**

Dan Rosenberg

Real Pickles is a fermented foods company dedicated to a healthy, regional food system. The vegetables are from Northeast farms, and the store sells to retailers in the Northeast. Thinking about a long-term succession plan, the founders were concerned about consolidation of the national organics sector among a small set of corporations, many of whom were unlikely to share the founders' regionalist values.

They decided to put in place a cooperative structure while the company was growing as a strategy to protect their mission.

To keep the buy-in for worker-owners affordable, the company also sold non-voting preferred shares to community members, building off the successful precedent at Equal Exchange. Over 70 investors, including customers and suppliers, bought shares through a Direct Public Offering.

- [Slow Living Summit 2020 – Panel: Cooperative Ownership \[video\] \(2020\)](#)
- [Boston Fermentation Festival – Fermenting Workplace Democracy \[video\] \(2019\)](#)
- [CISA – Community Investment in the Local Food System \(2018\)](#)
- [Fifty by Fifty – Real Pickles DPO: How Employees Raised Half a Million Dollars to Buy a Business \(2017\)](#)
- [Project Equity – Financing Case Study: Real Pickles \(2015\)](#)
- [Co-opLaw.org – Legal Case Study: Real Pickles \(2014\)](#)
- [Rural Cooperatives – Our First Year as a Co-op \(2014\)](#)
- [Mass Live – Real Pickles in Greenfield offering coop shares \(2013\)](#)
- [NFCA – Real Pickles is Going Co-op \(2013\)](#)



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## Warrenstreet Architects Concord, NH

[warrenstreet.coop](http://warrenstreet.coop)

Cooperative Since 2008



image from Warrenstreet

"I am incredibly proud of our firm's ability to continually evolve, overcome challenges and evoke change during times of adversity. Far beyond our portfolio of projects and bottom line, it's the foundation of trust and quality of relationships we've built over the last three decades that means the most. Our cooperative business structure mirrors our design philosophies for thoughtful planning, innovative approaches and respectful collaboration and fosters a legacy for leadership we hope lasts far into the future."

Jonathan Halle

Warrenstreet Architects, Inc., is a 12-member design firm headquartered in Concord, New Hampshire. The firm provides planning, architecture, landscape architecture and interior design services for a multitude of project types and markets throughout New England. The company has thrived for 30 years and opened a second office location in Manchester in 2020.

Known for their unique strategies and solutions, the firm converted from a small partnership to an employee owned cooperative in 2008, becoming one of the first design firm cooperatives in the U.S. The company chose a cooperative model with the belief that sharing the responsibilities and rewards of the business with the next generation of staff would help ensure the firm's leadership and longevity, retain and empower staff, build legacy and create a sense of belonging and peer to peer relationships that would carry the firm far into the future.

The firm has been honored as Business NH Magazine's 2019 Business of the Year, and received the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce's 2018 Small Business of the Year Pinnacle Award. Cooperative Managing Member Jonathan Halle received NH Business Review's NH200 Award in 2020 as one of the Granite State's Most Influential Business Leaders,.

Social responsibility is an ingrained component of Warrenstreet's culture. The firm has provided pro-bono services for numerous design and construction efforts including projects for the Friendly Kitchen, Concord Coalition to End Homelessness, NH State Veterans Cemetery and The Animal Rescue League of NH.

- [Greater Concord Chamber - Local Businesses And Volunteers Honored At Pinnacle Awards \(2018\)](#)
- [NH Business Review - Independent spirit breeds co-ops in NH \(2017\)](#)
- [Concord Insider – Jonathan Halle is going to design us a sweet downtown office space \(2013\)](#)



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[info@cooperativefund.org](mailto:info@cooperativefund.org)



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## Collective Copies Florence, MA

[collectivecopies.com](http://collectivecopies.com)

Cooperative since 1983



Image from Collective Copies

"It has been pretty amazing for my life. I've since bought a home and raised a family. Just being a small business owner in downtown Amherst, it's really rewarding for me... I say good morning to all the other shopkeepers."

Matt Grillo

Workers at a chain copy shop went on strike in the early 1980s for better pay and conditions. They won their demands, but then were laid off when the shop lost its lease. In response they launched their own shop as a cooperative.

The cooperative has grown, opening up a second location in 2000, and launching a book publishing arm in 2009. They have also helped establish a regional cooperative association with a loan fund.

Turnover at Collective Copies is quite low: the shop's six worker-owners possess 140 years of combined experience.

- [Christian Science Monitor – Who's the boss? In worker-owned cooperatives, everyone is. \(2019\)](#)
- [Valley Advocate – Surprise! It's a Co-op. Any business can be a worker-owned business \(2016\)](#)
- [Truthout – Unions and Cooperatives: How Workers Can Survive and Thrive \(2016\)](#)
- [Daily Gazette – Steve Strimer's love affair with print continues with Levellers Press \(2014\)](#)
- [Mass Live – Valley Alliance of Worker Cooperatives establishes loan fund \(2013\)](#)
- [Cornwell – Worker Co-operatives and Spaces of Possibility \(2012\) - \[video\]](#)
- [Trott – The Story of Collective Copies \(2007\)\]](#)
- [GEO – Collective Copies Celebrates 20 Years! \(2003\)](#)
- [UE – A Working Life Beyond Bosses \(2003\)](#)
- [GEO – The Art of Making Decisions Together, Inside a Worker-Owned Union Co-op \(2001\)](#)

