

COOPERATIVE FUND

OF THE NORTHEAST

CFNE News

Fall 2022

Our Mission

We work for economic, social, and racial justice by advancing community-based, cooperative, and democratically owned or managed enterprises with a preference for assisting cooperatives in low-income communities by:

- providing financial products at reasonable rates
- developing business skills
- offering an investment opportunity that promotes socially conscious enterprise

Our Vision

Economic justice for all through thriving cooperative enterprises

What Is a Cooperative?

A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.

Values

Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity.

Principles

Cooperatives embrace the principles of voluntary open ownership, democratic owner control, owner economic participation, autonomy and independence, education, training and information, cooperation among cooperatives, and concern for community.

Visit us online at

www.coopfund.coop

to find links to our borrowers, access our loan application, download our prospectus, and to learn more about cooperatives.

PO Box 970
Watertown, MA 02471

Loans Approved and Funded

CFNE has had an exciting year. Through August, we deployed \$7MM in loan funds! With four months to go, we are on track to break our organizational lending record.

Organizing for the **Assabet Co-op Market** began in 2012. They now have over 2,000 member-owners. This July they broke ground on a leased space in Maynard, MA and have begun renovations.

Assabet Co-op Market has a larger trade area than is typical for a food co-op, serving a rural/suburban area outside of Boston. They held a successful capital campaign -- and recently launched a supplemental capital campaign to accommodate increasing construction costs and costs related to equipment delays.

Maine Camp Outfitters preserved nine jobs and kept an important company in Deer Isle, ME, through a cooperative conversion.

The business has operated for more than thirty years, providing wholesale branded merchandise for summer camps and small businesses throughout Maine, as well as operating a retail gift shop.

The cooperative received support from the Co-op Development Institute (CDI) throughout the conversion process.

Fork Food Lab is a "member-centric nonprofit," a food business incubator and shared commercial kitchen in Portland, ME. It has over sixty members, ranging from food producers and processors, to food trucks, bakeries and caterers, to food-related educational providers. Member businesses are 60% women-owned and 20% BIPOC, with places of origin in Southeast Asia, Africa, South America and Eastern Europe. Currently Fork is designing a renovated 42,000 square foot facility in South Portland with plans to move in early 2023.

Austin Design is a full-service architecture firm in Brattleboro, VT, serving southern VT, western MA, and southwestern NH. They have been in business for 30 years under the leadership of founder Bill Austin. Bill retired this year by selling the company to his employees. The current staff includes two architects, seven designers/draftspeople, and General Manager Chamois Holschuh.



FROM CFNE LEADERSHIP

Dear cooperators,

As you can see on page 1, our lending team has been busy. We have also strengthened our development services, our financial tool kit, and our staff. And we're not stopping there!

With our primary strategic goal as our north star (giving BIPOC communities equitable opportunity to form, fund, and operate cooperatives), we approved two innovative new initiatives to advance our racial equity goals.

- Recognizing that equitable co-op development means BIPOC communities need more co-op development resources, **we launched the Co-op Navigator Fellowship.** This fellowship builds the capacity of six BIPOC-rooted and -led economic development organizations to promote and develop co-ops in their communities (for more info, read the Learning Team update on page 3).
- **We are piloting a financial product to support high impact start-up co-ops with the potential to move industries toward justice,** allocating \$1 million of our net assets to up to ten "equity-like" investments, with repayment terms tied to the co-op's success, not to a predetermined schedule. We approved our first investment, which we will publicize once all of the documents are signed.

Taking on these new initiatives requires more staff capacity. **See elsewhere on this page for two recent, exciting hires.**

As our organization has grown, our board role has changed, from being very hands-on a few years ago to an oversight and strategy-setting role. This has allowed our board to focus on the big questions and our big ambitious answers, and to support making board service accessible for more of our stakeholders.

All of these developments required close collaboration between our staff and our board, informed by the experiences of our region's many co-op communities. We are deeply appreciative of everyone's collaboration and support, and look forward to finishing this year on a strong note!

In cooperation,

Bonnie Hudspeth, President

Kimberly R. Lyle, Vice-president

Micha Josephy, Executive Director

INTRODUCING OUR NEW STAFF

Maggie Maiorana joined CFNE's Learning Team in the role of Program Associate. Maggie has worked in public schools, farms, and nonprofits with a focus on advancing social and racial justice. She has a BA in Human Ecology and a Maine Teaching Certificate from College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine, and a Higher Degree in Fine Art through Burren College of Art in Ireland. Living in the Lewiston/Auburn community of Maine, she has invested her time in teaching, community organizing, and facilitation. At Youth LED Justice, she used restorative justice processes to divert young people away from entrenchment in the Juvenile Justice System. Maggie supports economic justice, particularly for those who have faced structural barriers in attaining economic security.



Liska Wilson joins us in November as our first Communications Director. She is a seasoned communications professional with expertise in entrepreneurship, brand development, and community building, with a degree in Marketing and Management. Based in Albany, NY, Liska founded She's a Boss, a non-profit that supports the career and business development of Black and Brown women. She has worked as a consultant on DEI Communications; as a co-owner of Busy Day, offering business services; and as a free-lance marketing consultant and brand coach. She will draw on her more than ten-year career as a communications consultant and entrepreneur to deepen CFNE's communications work.



WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

In April, Johan Matthews attended the National Conference on Black Cooperative Agenda in Baltimore MD, developing relationships with Black cooperators across the country. Since then, conference attendees have reconnected to co-develop a national Black cooperative ecosystem. Johan is serving on the group's resource development committee, helping to facilitate capital access and capacity building for its members, as well as supporting the planning efforts for next year's conference.

Also in April, the Cooperative Maine Business Alliance (CMBA) held a successful annual P6 Cooperative Conference. More than 100 cooperators from across the state gathered to tell their stories of surviving the pandemic, to learn, and to celebrate co-ops in person for the first time in over two years. Keynote speaker Christine Hallquist, a long-time cooperator and now leading a collaborative Broadband effort in VT, was inspirational. Workshop topics included community solar, cooperative housing, and cooperative governance. Chris Linder of CFNE and Rob Brown of CDI offered a session on presenting financial performance results to different stakeholders in digestible ways.

CFNE and CDI also partnered in a session on the Formation and Financing of Cooperatives for Maine's Businesses at the Common

Business Support and Partnership Development

In June, CFNE's board approved an investment of over \$800,000 for our new Co-op Navigator Fellowship. In this three-year program, CFNE is partnering with community-based economic development organizations across the northeast to hire, train, and mentor entrepreneurs and organizers who will serve as Co-op Navigators. These fellows will study successful co-op models, help their communities identify co-op opportunities, and embed these learnings into host organizations' work.

We'd like to extend our gratitude to the borrowers, donors, and investors who are our partners in this initiative to change the face of the co-op movement, and the host organizations who have walked with us to create this pilot: Boston Ujima Project (Boston, MA); Capital Region Co-op Cnxn (Troy, NY); Four Directions Development Corporation (Orono, ME); Fuerza Laboral/Power of Workers (Central Falls, RI); Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust (northeast regional); and ReSET (Hartford, CT).

This project launched in October 2022, after consultation with Black, Latinx, and Indigenous-rooted organizations developing community-owned and -governed enterprises. Our nation's legacy of racism and colonialism has meant that emerging communities have had limited access to culturally relevant co-op development support and investment. The Fellowship will increase access to culturally and linguistically appropriate TA for diverse entrepreneurs seeking to build wealth and self-determination through co-ops. In the longer term, it will provide a runway for community partners to coordinate a regional strategy for future funding and development.



WE'VE BEEN UP TO?

Ground Fair in Unity, ME, in September.

In early September CFNE's New York Loan Officer, Joe Marraffino, organized a day-long workshop track on Money and the Movements at the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives conference in Philadelphia. Sessions explored the financing of movement-aligned cooperative projects. A morning panel focused on capital supply from CDFIs, loan funds, direct public offerings, and employee-owned trusts, and included frequent CFNE collaborators LEAF and CEI. An afternoon panel heard from capital recipients, including CFNE borrowers White Electric Coffee, Kalche Wine Co, and The Drivers Cooperative, as well as Clark Arrington, a CFNE board member. In between panels there were conversations among government actors and grassroots groups, including former NY City Mayor de Blasio's office, the NY City Network of Worker Cooperatives, the Mass. Center for Employee Ownership, and the Mass. Solidarity Economy Network.

Ending the day, small groups discussed short videos describing "movement money" in other places and times: historic African American cooperatives, union-led buyouts in the 1980s and 1990s, Italy's Marcora Law, and Quebec's Solidarity Cooperatives.

As this newsletter goes to press, Micha Josephy is presenting on a panel at the Opportunity Finance Network conference in NY City on Expanding Financing for Employee Ownership Strategies.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Bonnie Hudspeth, *President*
Kimberly R. Lyle, *Vice-President*
Matthew Feinstein, *Clerk*
Andy Danforth, *Treasurer*
Clark Arrington
Duke Bouchard
Amethyst Carey
Susy Ellis
Jonah Fertig-Burd
Jon Reske
Daniel Ross
Marilyn Scholl

STAFF

Tiffany Browning
Loan Administrator and
Bookkeeper
tiffany@coopfund.coop

Maggie Cohn
Loan and Outreach Officer
maggie@coopfund.coop

Carolyn Edsell-Vetter
Cooperative Business Support
and Outreach Officer
carolyn@coopfund.coop

Rebecca Fletcher
Loan and Outreach Officer
rfletcher@coopfund.coop

Dorian Gregory
Deputy Executive Director
dorian@coopfund.coop

Micha Josephy
Executive Director
micha@coopfund.coop

Chris Linder
Loan and Outreach Officer
chris@coopfund.coop

Maggie Maiorana
Program Associate
mmaiorana@coopfund.coop

Vikas Mangipudi
Loan and Outreach Officer
vikas@coopfund.coop

Joe Marraffino
Loan and Outreach officer
joe@coopfund.coop

Johan Matthews
Community Engagement
Facilitator
johan@coopfund.coop

Josie Shagwert
Administrative Manager
josie@coopfund.coop

Liska Wilson
Communications Director
liska@coopfund.coop

CFNE is a U.S. Treasury certified
Community Development
Financial Institution
(CDFI).



Return Service Requested

**NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
BOSTON, MA
PERMIT # 1670**



Like us on
Facebook