

What's new for cooperatives from the Government of Manitoba?

It's an exciting time for co-ops across the province. Next year is the International Year of Cooperatives and the Government of Manitoba is making it easier for groups to start new and grow existing co-ops and for students to learn about this great work.

What is the Government of Manitoba doing to celebrate the International Year of Cooperatives in 2012?

The Government of Manitoba, through Cooperative Development Services, is partnering with the co-operative community to plan a number of events and initiatives in recognition of the United Nations International Year of Cooperatives in 2012. Look for more information about these on our website later this year and throughout 2012.

How is the Government of Manitoba supporting co-op housing development?

The Government of Manitoba is providing funding to support the Co-op Housing Community Mobilizer (CHCM) project, an initiative being run through a community based organization to generate interest in the development of new housing cooperatives. The CHCM will draw on existing cooperatives and other community based organizations' expertise and the extensive work these organizations have done to assist groups wishing to develop a housing co-op.

How is the Government of Manitoba supporting co-op research?

The Government of Manitoba is establishing a Manitoba Co-op Research Fund to provide grants of up to \$5000 for scholarly and interdisciplinary research about cooperatives. These grants will allow researchers to do innovative research into cooperatives and lay the foundation for concrete and sustainable projects that will make a difference for the cooperative community.

How is the Government of Manitoba making it easier for groups to form new, or expand existing co-ops?

The Government of Manitoba amended *The Cooperatives 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. The Government of Manitoba also created a new Cooperative Tax Credit fund that provides support for new and expanding co-ops. It is funded through contributions from cooperatives 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.

How can students learn more about co-ops?

A new activity book, "All Four Each" has been developed for use by high school teachers to teach students about co-ops. The activities are easy to follow and include worksheets for in-class assignments, handouts for homework, and resources to assist teachers. The activity book will be provided to high school teachers in all Manitoba schools to inform students about cooperative approaches.

How is the Government of Manitoba supporting co-operative education for youth?

The Government of Manitoba is providing support to the Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba (CDEM) to co-ordinate the Youth Co-operative Services Program. Through this program CDEM is helping young people form worker co-ops and then connecting those co-ops with businesses, municipalities and organizations who will hire them to provide lawn care, cleaning and other services that benefit those communities.

How do I learn more about these initiatives?

To learn more about the initiatives discussed here, or the many other ways the Government of Manitoba is supporting co-ops, go to: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/housing/coop/>.

Or contact the Cooperative Development program directly at:

Manitoba Housing and Community Development

2nd floor - 406 Edmonton St.

Winnipeg MB R3B 2M2

Phone: 204-945-3379 Fax: 204-948-1065

Toll-free: 1-866-479-6155

Email: co-ops@gov.mb.ca