

What's new for co-operatives from the Government of Manitoba?

It's an exciting time for co-ops across the province. Next year is the International Year of Co-operatives 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 Co-operatives in 2012?

The Government of Manitoba, through Co-operative 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 Co-operatives 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 co-operatives. The CHCM will draw on existing co-operatives 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 co-operatives. These grants will allow researchers to do innovative research into co-operatives and lay the foundation for concrete and sustainable projects that will make a difference for the co-operative 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 Co-operatives 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 Co-operative Tax Credit fund that provides support for new and expanding co-ops. It is funded through contributions from co-operatives 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 co-operative 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 Co-operative Development program directly at:

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