

# THEORY of CHANGE

Lessons from  
**Rise to Own It**



Interpersonal  
Transformation

Everyone Can  
Access & Thrive  
in Worker  
Ownership

Personal  
Change

Collective  
Transformation

Institutional  
Transformation

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Special thanks to Rise to Own It participations for validation. Thanks also to the COWOP Coalition for feedback and additions.

Structuring of this report was assisted by artificial intelligence.

**Design was done by CoopMatters LLC.**

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# I.

## Executive Summary

This executive summary provides an overview of the Theory of Change developed for the promotion of worker ownership and economic justice, based on the context outlined in this document. The Theory of Change serves as a roadmap for the **Coalition for Worker Ownership and Power** (COWOP) and its stakeholders to achieve the goal of ensuring that everyone can access and thrive in worker ownership.

The Theory of Change aims to address the challenges and opportunities faced by worker-owned cooperatives in Massachusetts, with a particular focus on empowering marginalized communities and advancing racial equity.

### I.

## Summary of Recommendations

To advance the cause of worker ownership and economic justice, the following target areas for transformation have been identified:

**Personal Change:** Foster psychological safety and access to basic human needs like affordable housing, access to healthcare and relevant skills, enabling individuals to engage actively in worker ownership initiatives and overcome systemic barriers.

**Interpersonal Transformation:** Create inclusive and engaging interactions that promote accountability, leadership development, and collective decision-making across the worker ownership ecosystem.

**Collective Transformation:** Build community power by strengthening relationships, promoting cooperative culture, undoing traditional hierarchies, and fostering collaboration among worker-owned enterprises and solidarity economy networks.

**Institutional Transformation:** Advocate for policy changes, transparent and accessible governance practices in government, business and coalitions, together with financial support that recognizes the value and potential of worker-owned businesses, while addressing systemic inequities.

## I.

### **Addressing Financing Challenges:**

- Lobby and build power for policy changes to prioritize equitable financing terms and conditions for worker-owned enterprises, including access to government funding and contracts.
- Streamline and simplify the process of obtaining grants and loans for cooperatives.
- Establish direct financial support programs for worker-owned enterprises, similar to the Small Business Relief program.

### **Strengthening Inclusivity and Accountability:**

- Develop and implement robust onboarding processes, hiring practices and continual growth systems within cooperatives to address power dynamics and ensure alignment with cooperative values.
- Establish shared mediation guidelines and mechanisms for conflict resolution within worker-owned enterprises.
- Provide comprehensive board training programs to enhance governance practices and ensure transparency and accountability.
- Create conditions for people of color and worker owners to be in positions of power and leadership, and set them up for success; making sure their needs are met to thrive, offering stipends, childcare, translation, information, mentorship, etc.
- Provide childcare as standard practice in order to remove a key barrier to participation.

## I.

### **Promoting Education, Training, and Knowledge Sharing:**

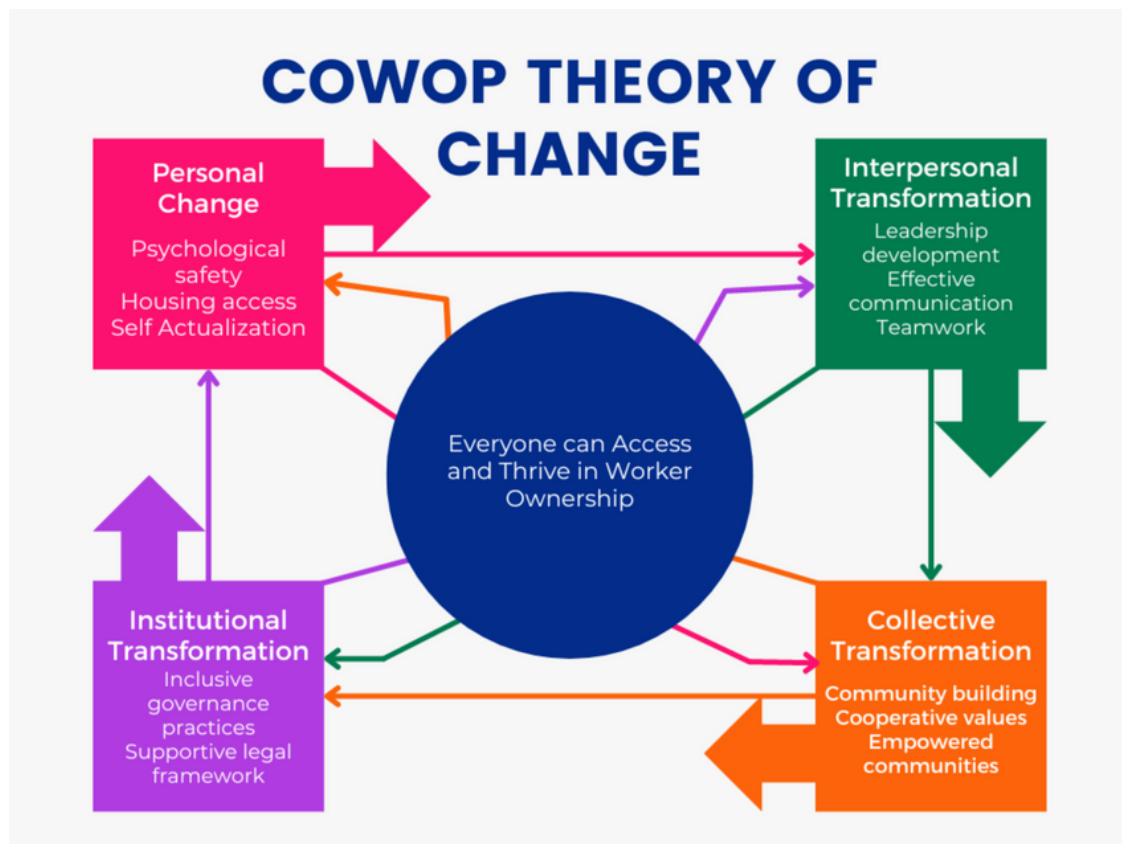
- Develop culturally sensitive and practical training programs to meet the needs of worker owners from diverse backgrounds.
- Foster cooperative networks and platforms for resource sharing, collaboration, and learning among worker-owned enterprises and solidarity economy initiatives.
- Allow peer-to-peer learning, in-business training, industry-specific training, to all levels of workers.
- Promote public awareness and understanding of the cooperative model through cohesive and affirming messaging, showcasing successful cooperatives and worker-owned enterprises.

### **Enhancing Collaborative Partnerships and Solidarity:**

- Cultivate partnerships with municipal and statewide agencies to increase support for worker-owned businesses led by people of color.
- Engage in educational and collaborative efforts with government and quasi-governmental organizations to leverage their economic growth potential.
- Foster strategic collaborations between worker co-ops, with movement partners, co-op organizers, and support NGOs to strengthen the worker ownership ecosystem.

These recommendations, when implemented, will contribute to the transformation of the worker ownership landscape in Massachusetts, creating a more equitable and inclusive economy that allows everyone to access and thrive in worker ownership.

This Theory of Change document provides a strategic framework for COWOP to advance the cause of worker ownership and economic justice. This report centers on the perspectives and priorities of worker owners and aspiring worker owners from working class and communities of color. By fostering personal change, interpersonal transformation, collective transformation, and institutional transformation, we can create an ecosystem where everyone has the opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, worker ownership. The recommendations outlined in this summary serve as actionable strategies and best practices to guide stakeholders in achieving these objectives and realizing the vision of accessible and thriving worker ownership in Massachusetts.



The interconnection between the elements of the changes we need to move towards the impact we want – access and success in worker ownership by all – are shown in the flow above.



## II.

# Introduction

## Background & Context

The promotion of worker ownership and economic justice has emerged as a critical issue in the current socio-economic landscape. In Massachusetts, the ***Coalition for Worker Ownership and Power*** (COWOP) and its diverse stakeholders have been actively working towards increasing access and participation in worker ownership for the working class and communities of color. Using our collective wisdom, we developed an emergent framework that synthesized the best practices from participating organizations for aligning development efforts with national priorities, emphasizing the importance of economic justice and inclusive economies. This document builds upon this guidance and the comprehensive discussions held in the Rise to Own it convenings in order to develop a Theory of Change specifically tailored to advance the cause of worker ownership in Massachusetts.

### II.

## Purpose & Scope of the Document

The purpose of this document is to present a comprehensive Theory of Change that outlines strategies and best practices for promoting worker ownership and economic justice. The document focuses on the specific context of Massachusetts, taking into account the challenges, opportunities, and priorities identified by the stakeholders involved in the COWOP coalition. It aims to provide a roadmap for COWOP and its stakeholders to achieve the goal of ensuring that everyone can access and thrive in worker ownership.

The ultimate effect of access to success in worker ownership that we wish to see is worker owned businesses serving as a means to bridge the wealth gap: successful co-op businesses offer a way for working class communities of color to access dignified working conditions, and a share in the profits they help generate at work, leading to prosperous communities and human wellbeing across race and class.

### II.

## Importance of Theory of Change in Promoting Worker Ownership

A Theory of Change is a vital tool for guiding and informing the efforts to bring about meaningful change. In the context of worker ownership, it provides a structured framework for understanding the interconnections between various components, such as personal change, interpersonal transformation, collective transformation, and institutional transformation. By developing a Theory of Change, stakeholders can identify key objectives, outcomes, and strategies necessary to address the challenges faced by worker-owned cooperatives and promote economic justice. It is a tool for coordinating impactful action by diverse stakeholders towards a common goal. This is necessary for the COWOP coalition as it will take all of us to achieve the goal we want to see - many different actors from different parts of the worker ownership ecosystem will need to coordinate for rapid advance towards our goal of all being able to access and thrive in Worker ownership.

The Theory of Change presented in this document is based on the collective wisdom and insights of the stakeholders involved in the COWOP coalition. It provides a strategic framework that leverages some guidance from Race Forward along with other partners and aligns with the specific context of Massachusetts.

### II.

As per the priorities stated by the worker owners and aspiring worker owners from working class and communities of color, that met twice in 2022 in two gateway cities on either side of our state, the strategies and best practices proposed within the Theory of Change aim to address financing challenges, strengthen inclusivity and accountability at every level - from the personal, to the private worker owned business level, to the coalition level and all the way through to state government level. They also promote education and training, enhance collaborative partnerships, and advocate for policy changes and governance practices.

By utilizing the Theory of Change and implementing the recommended strategies and best practices, COWOP and its stakeholders can drive meaningful and sustainable change in the worker ownership landscape. This document will delve into the specific components of the Theory of Change, outline actionable recommendations, propose an implementation plan, and provide guidance on monitoring and evaluation to ensure the effectiveness and impact of the proposed strategies.

In conclusion, the Theory of Change presented in this document serves as a strategic roadmap to advance worker ownership and economic justice in Massachusetts. By embracing the proposed strategies and best practices, stakeholders can work collaboratively towards creating an inclusive and equitable economy where everyone has the opportunity to access and thrive in worker ownership.

# III.

## Theoretical Framework

### Understanding the Cooperative and Solidarity Economy Principles

Understanding the Cooperative and Solidarity Economy Principles serves as a guiding framework for aligning development efforts with national priorities and promoting sustainable development. The solidarity economy includes practices such as cooperatives (eg. worker, food, and housing co-ops, credit unions) community land trusts, social currencies, participatory budgeting, and mutual aid, to name a few, that align with solidarity economy values. The US Solidarity Economy Network lifts up these five values: solidarity/cooperation, participatory democracy, equity in all dimensions, sustainability, and pluralism, meaning that it is not a one-size-fits-all approach.

The big tent framework of the solidarity economy provides the scaffolding to connect these practices to give shape to a post-capitalist system--solidarity economy takes the position that we need system change beyond capitalism in order to achieve a more cooperative, just, democratic, and sustainable world. Worker cooperatives are a backbone of the solidarity economy, as they are well aligned with solidarity economy values both in principle and structure, and occupy a critical space in production, distribution, and consumption. In the context of promoting worker ownership and economic justice in Massachusetts, the guidance of the international cooperative and solidarity economy movements as well as COWOP's sister organization, the Massachusetts Solidarity Economy Network (MASSEN), provide a foundation for understanding the broader development objectives and aligning local efforts with global principles.

### III.

## Linking Theory of Change to Worker Ownership and Economic Justice

The Theory of Change developed for worker ownership and economic justice in Massachusetts builds upon the cooperative movement and the insights from the Rise to Own It convenings. It recognizes the significance of worker ownership as a means to achieve economic justice and promote inclusive economies. The theoretical framework of this document acknowledges that worker ownership challenges traditional hierarchical structures, empowers individuals, and promotes equitable distribution of wealth and resources.

Within the context of worker ownership, the Theory of Change focuses on four interconnected components: Personal change (individual level), Interpersonal transformation (changes to interpersonal interactions), Collective Transformation (changes in culture and group functioning), and institutional transformation (changes in policies and procedures).

The theoretical framework presented in this document establishes the basis for understanding the Theory of Change in promoting worker ownership and economic justice. It provides a conceptual lens through which the specific strategies and best practices presented in this document are based on the collective wisdom and insights of the stakeholders involved in the COWOP coalition. It provides a strategic framework that leverages some guidance from Race Forward along with other partners and aligns with the specific context of Massachusetts.

## IV.

# Methodology

## Approach to Developing the Theory of Change

The development of the Theory of Change for promoting worker ownership and economic justice in Massachusetts was approached through a collaborative and participatory process. The goal was to ensure that the Theory of Change reflected the diverse perspectives, insights, and experiences of worker owners and aspiring worker owners from working class and communities of color in Massachusetts, core stakeholder groups that the the Coalition for Worker Ownership and Power (COWOP) is committed to center in its work. The approach involved synthesizing the many Theory of Change methodologies we found online and the comprehensive discussions held in and between Rise to Own It sessions to inform the strategies and best practices proposed.

### IV.

## Stakeholder Engagement and Input Process

The engagement of stakeholders was a fundamental aspect of developing the Theory of Change. The COWOP coalition and its diverse stakeholders, including worker owners, aspiring worker owners, government organizations, lenders, and movement partners, were actively involved in sharing their experiences, challenges, and aspirations related to worker ownership and economic justice.

Through group activities conducted in gateway cities made accessible to participants with transportation, availability of childcare and translation, and stipends to compensate for opportunity cost of time, and also through virtual gatherings and discussions, participants had the opportunity to voice their perspectives and contribute to the development of the Theory of Change. This participatory approach ensured that the Theory of Change accurately reflected the needs and priorities of the community.



### IV.

## Data Collection and Analysis Methods

Data collection for the development of the Theory of Change involved a combination of qualitative methods, including group discussions, interviews, and document analysis. These methods allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by worker-owned cooperatives, the opportunities for growth and transformation, and the strategies and best practices that could advance the cause of worker ownership and economic justice.

The data collected from stakeholder engagements and discussions were analyzed thematically to identify common trends, challenges, and potential solutions. The analysis process involved participatory categorizing, and synthesizing the qualitative data by process participants to extract key insights and inform the development of the Theory of Change. The outcomes of participatory synthesis were collectively validated through notes review, synthesis report review and validation session, theory of change report review and validation session.

The methodology employed in developing the Theory of Change ensured that multiple perspectives were considered, and the strategies and best practices proposed were grounded in the lived experiences of key stakeholders: those living or seeking worker ownership, and those experiencing marginalization and thus facing barriers we collectively need to overcome barriers so that everyone can access and thrive in worker ownership. This approach aimed to foster inclusivity, collaboration, and ownership among stakeholders and increase the likelihood of successful implementation and impact of the proposed interventions.

V.

## Context Analysis

### **Overview of the Coalition for Worker Ownership and Power (COWOP)**

The Coalition for Worker Ownership and Power (COWOP) is a collective effort in Massachusetts aimed at increasing access and participation in worker ownership, particularly for the working class and communities of color. COWOP comprises 28 organizations representing cooperatives, technical assistance providers, funders, worker centers, community organizations, labor, and other key stakeholders. The coalition seeks to address systemic barriers and advocate for policies that support worker-owned businesses.

### V.

## **Review of Membership, Stakeholders, & Working Groups**

COWOP's membership consists of a diverse range of organizations and individuals committed to advancing worker ownership and economic justice. The coalition has a Steering Committee with five of the nine seats held by people of color, representing organizations that primarily serve communities of color. Monthly gatherings, attended by over 20 participants, foster communication and collaboration among the membership and allies.

COWOP has three working groups: a legislative working group, a resource sharing working group, and a public education and communications working group. These groups facilitate the implementation of the coalition's work, but there is a need to strengthen the participation of people of color and worker owners within these groups.

### V.

## Key Challenges and Opportunities for Worker Ownership in Massachusetts

Participants of Rise to Own It and the analysis of the content they shared reveals several challenges and opportunities for promoting worker ownership in Massachusetts:

### Financing

Worker-owned cooperatives face significant challenges in accessing financial support. Traditional institutions and government agencies often prioritize conventional business structures and overlook the unique governance models of cooperatives. This necessitates the need to advocate for equitable financing terms, access to capital, and increased support for worker-owned businesses. Worker owners and aspiring worker owners have a rainbow of suggestions for ways to intervene to level the financing playing field, ranging from support to access working capital, to expanded grant opportunities, subsidies for worker owned businesses, to loan guarantees and loan funds and more. Even with a level playing field, for those from struggling communities, there is often a need for significant TA to get aspiring or current worker owners to an eligible position for financing.

### V.

#### **Education & Support**

Worker owners, particularly those from struggling communities who may lack financial and social capital, require technical assistance and support in business development, solidarity economy, cooperative culture-building, conflict resolution, compliance, and navigating institutional structures. Strengthening training and educational programs can enhance the capacity of worker owners and address their specific needs. TA providers in marginalized communities need to be prepared to be engaged both intensively and over a lengthy period of time. Offering training without follow up support can do almost more harm than good, as without consistent TA, many of the participants do not have the skills to start up and successfully manage a business. It is critically important to avoid setting people up to fail.

#### **Identity, Recruitment, and Communication**

Building a strong cooperative network and promoting the value of worker ownership require cohesive messaging, brand recognition, and media support. Recruitment efforts should focus on cultivating new worker owners and fostering relationships with tax-funded state agencies to ensure committed support for worker ownership initiatives.

### V.

#### **Institutional Engagement**

Collaborating with municipal and statewide agencies is essential for expanding support to worker-owned businesses. Advocacy for policy changes, such as tax-funded support and access to government institutions, funding and contracts, can create an enabling environment for worker ownership to thrive.

#### **Inclusivity and Accountability**

Ensuring diversity, inclusivity, and accountability within worker-owned cooperatives is crucial for promoting a culture of equity and shared decision-making. Establishing clear and transparent, “plain speech” internal agreements and governance procedures at all levels of the worker ownership ecosystem is necessary - at the cooperative business level, the coalition level and at the state government and government agency level (e.g. for MassCEO). Strengthening member and board training, and addressing power dynamics within cooperative institutions can enhance practice of economic democracy and increase worker owned cooperatives’ effectiveness and sustainability.

By understanding the challenges and opportunities within the context of worker ownership in Massachusetts, a Theory of Change can propose targeted strategies and best practices to overcome barriers and leverage potential for positive change. The subsequent sections of this document will delve into these strategies and provide recommendations for advancing worker ownership and economic justice according to the priorities raised above.

# VI.

## Theory of Change Components

### **Personal Change: Fostering Psychological Safety - Access to Basic Needs & Skills and Resources to Step Into Effective Cooperative Entrepreneurship**

Psychological safety is an essential condition for effective cooperative entrepreneurship, particularly inclusive cooperative entrepreneurship that everyone, including people in historically marginalized communities can access. Psychological safety means many things, including a sense that worker owners are safe and have access to basic needs for wellbeing (like health, safety and housing, food security) and also access to resources and opportunities to develop the specific skills and resources required for effective cooperative entrepreneurship, including self awareness, discipline, mentorship, self-permission to take a risk and maybe fail knowing you have resilient self-respect and community regard and a safety net and growth potential to bounce back if you happen to fail...

### VI.

This can be achieved by creating environments that encourage individuals to seek assistance, voice concerns, and challenge systemic norms. Strategies to foster psychological safety include providing training on conflict resolution, healthy communication, and cooperative culture-building. Additionally, addressing housing affordability issues is crucial to ensure that worker owners have stable living conditions and can fully participate in cooperative initiatives. Advocacy for policies that address affordable housing, healthcare, education and supporting worker owners in accessing resources that improve quality of life are key actions in this component.

### **Interpersonal Transformation: Engaging Gatherings & Leadership Development**

Interpersonal transformation is vital for creating a culture of accountability, leadership development, and collective decision-making within the worker ownership movement. We want to develop new interactions between people, free from existing hierarchies (founder - newcomer, age, knowledge, language, class, race). To build new more equitable interactions, we need mentorship and coaching, cultures of reflection, feedback and course correction. Cultures of cooperation require overcoming the “employee only” mentality and moving into “owner mindset” and learning collective governance.



VI.

## **Collective Transformation: Building Community Power & Cooperative Culture**

Collective transformation involves building community power and fostering a cooperative culture that promotes collaboration, solidarity, and shared learning. Strategies to advance collective transformation include strengthening relationships among worker-owned enterprises and solidarity economy networks, creating spaces for knowledge sharing and resource exchange, and organizing cooperative training programs. Emphasizing cooperative principles such as democratic decision-making, equity, and mutual support is crucial for building a robust and inclusive cooperative culture. By engaging in collective learning and cooperative practices, worker owners can develop the skills, knowledge, and networks necessary for the success of worker-owned enterprises.

Coalition convenings should be done in the style of engaging, participatory gatherings that promote inclusivity and create opportunities for all participants to contribute their ideas and perspectives are crucial. Best practices include utilizing facilitation techniques that encourage active participation, establishing clear meeting guidelines, and ensuring diverse representation in decision-making spaces. Leadership development programs should be implemented to empower worker owners to take on leadership roles, build their capacity, and foster a sense of ownership and responsibility within the cooperative ecosystem.

VI.

## **Institutional Transformation: Advocacy for Policy Changes & Governance Practices**

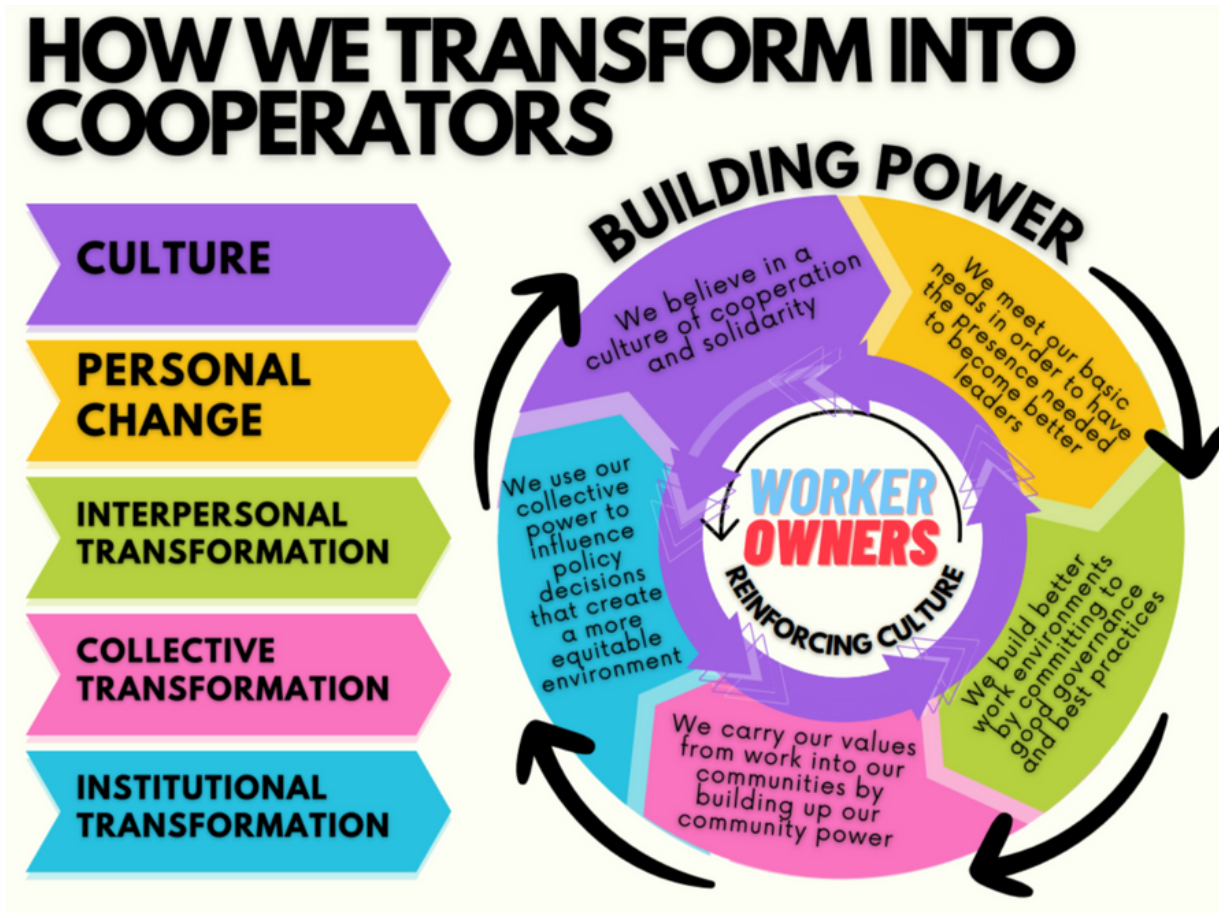
Institutional transformation involves advocating for policy changes and governance practices that recognize and support worker-owned businesses. This component focuses on influencing systemic change through strategic partnerships, collaborations with municipal and statewide agencies, and engagement with policymakers. Key strategies include promoting worker ownership in legislative agendas, advocating for equitable financing terms and access to capital, and establishing government loan guarantees for worker-owned enterprises.

Some of the areas where worker owners and aspiring worker owners would like to see policy solutions have yet to be developed into policy solutions, requiring development of policy concepts and language that can be campaigned around. Building relationships with legislators, engaging in policy dialogues, and mobilizing constituents are important actions to advance institutional transformation.

By addressing personal change, interpersonal transformation, collective transformation, and institutional transformation, the Theory of Change aims to create an enabling environment for worker ownership to thrive.

## VI.

These components are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, contributing to the overall goal of promoting worker ownership and economic justice. The subsequent sections of this document will provide detailed strategies and best practices within each component to guide stakeholders in implementing the Theory of Change effectively.



**Culture:** The set of predominating attitudes and behavior that characterize a group or organization.

# VII.

## Recommendations for Action

### Addressing Financing Challenges for Worker-Owned Enterprises

1. Advocate for policy changes and increased government support to ensure equitable financing terms and access to capital for worker-owned enterprises.
2. Develop relationships with financial institutions and explore opportunities for partnerships to create tailored financial products for worker-owned businesses.
3. Establish a cooperative fund or revolving loan fund specifically designed to support worker-owned enterprises, with a focus on serving marginalized communities.
4. Provide technical assistance and support to worker owners in navigating the financing process, including grant applications, loans, and alternative funding sources.
5. Explore other policy tools to support worker owned cooperatives financially (tax incentives, subsidies for companies that invest in their workers, government money to help worker owned cooperatives provide competitive benefit packages, etc.)

VII.

## **Strengthening Inclusivity & Accountability within Cooperatives & the Cooperative Ecosystem**

1. Implement comprehensive member and board training programs that focus on governance, bylaws, and compliance responsibilities, ensuring all worker owners and coalition members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in their cooperatives, in the COWOP Coalition, and in government set up to support worker owned cooperatives, such as MassCEO.
2. Foster a culture of inclusivity and diversity by developing clear internal agreements that promote equitable decision-making and representation within cooperatives, ensuring everyone has a seat at the decision making table
3. Establish mechanisms for conflict resolution and mediation to address power dynamics and ensure accountability among worker owners.
4. Develop mentorship programs and peer support networks and pools of resources (interpretation support, childcare, etc.) to enhance the capacity of worker owners, particularly those from marginalized communities.

VII.

## **Promoting Education, Training, & Knowledge Sharing**

1. Develop and disseminate educational resources on cooperative business development, legal structures, compliance, and other technical aspects of worker ownership.
2. Provide training programs on conflict resolution, communication skills, and cooperative culture-building to foster a cooperative mindset among worker owners.
3. Facilitate knowledge-sharing platforms and networks for worker owners to exchange best practices, lessons learned, and innovative solutions.
4. Collaborate with academic institutions, cooperative development centers, and technical assistance providers to offer targeted training programs for aspiring and existing worker owners.

VII.

## Enhancing Collaborative Partnerships & Solidarity

1. Continue to perform one to ones between participants of Rise to Own It, COWOP Coalition members, and other stakeholders in the worker ownership ecosystem. Strengthen partnerships with municipal and statewide agencies to advocate for worker ownership in economic development strategies and policies.
2. Foster collaborations with other worker-owned cooperatives, solidarity economy networks, and support organizations to share resources, collectively advocate for policy changes, and amplify the worker ownership movement.
3. Engage in regular dialogues and joint initiatives with trade unions, social justice organizations, and community-based groups to promote worker ownership as a pathway to economic justice.
4. Stakeholder mapping outreach and education to encourage conversion as a pathway to worker ownership.

VII.

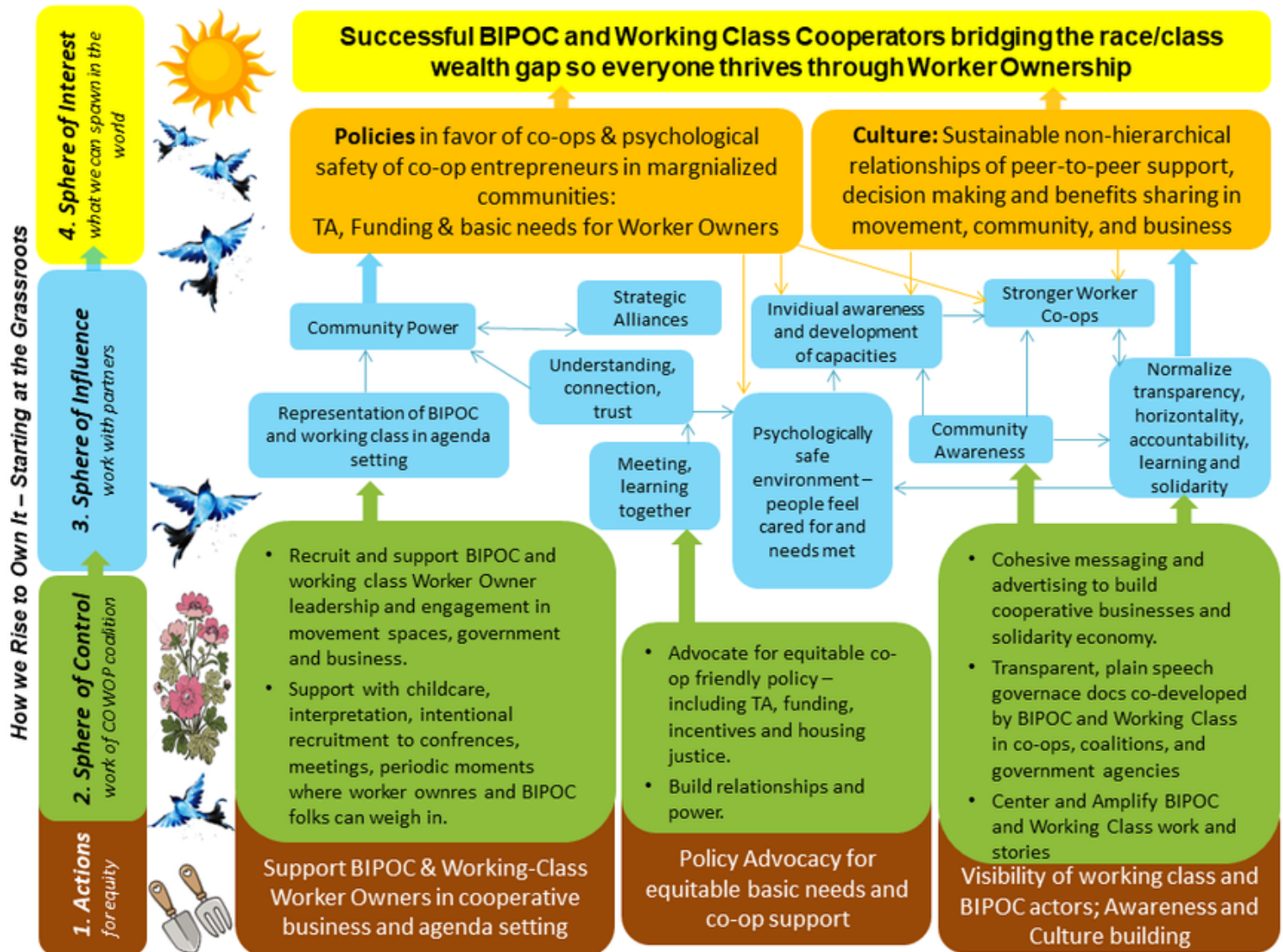
## **Empowering Marginalized Communities through Worker Ownership**

1. Prioritize outreach and support efforts in communities disproportionately affected by systemic inequities, including communities of color, low-income individuals, and marginalized groups.
2. Develop targeted programs and resources to address the specific needs and challenges faced by marginalized communities in starting and sustaining worker-owned enterprises.
3. Advocate for policies that prioritize access to government funding, contracts, and technical assistance for worker-owned businesses in marginalized communities.
4. Provide mentorship, coaching, and technical assistance to aspiring worker owners from marginalized communities to enhance their chances of success and long-term sustainability.



## VII.

These recommendations aim to advance the cause of worker ownership and economic justice by addressing key challenges, promoting inclusive and accountable practices, fostering knowledge sharing, building collaborative partnerships, and empowering marginalized communities. Implementing these strategies will contribute to a more equitable and sustainable economy that enables everyone to access and thrive in worker ownership.



# VIII.

## Implementation Plan

### Proposed Strategies and Activities for Each Theory of Change Component

- 1 **Personal Change:** Fostering Psychological Safety and Access to Housing.
  - Ecosystem offers c workshops and training sessions on conflict resolution, healthy communication, and cooperative culture-building.
  - Advocate for policies that focus on improving quality of life like affordable housing, healthcare, and education. Further, collaborate with organizations to create housing options and provide access to resources for worker owners.
  - Establish mentorship programs to support worker owners in navigating personal and professional challenges for self actualization. A healthy community is made of healthy individuals and self actualized people can help others self actualize!

## VIII.

### 2 **Interpersonal Transformation:** Engaging Gatherings and Leadership Development

- Organize regular gatherings that promote inclusivity and active participation from all stakeholders.
- Provide leadership development programs, including training on facilitation skills, decision-making processes, and cooperative governance.
- Develop guidelines and resources for effective meeting facilitation and decision-making to ensure equitable participation.
- Create conditions for people from our core constituencies in positions of leadership (coalition steering committee, government agencies serving worker ownership like MassCEO, ally organizations). Make sure people in these roles have the support and resources they need to succeed, and maintain ties with the bases they come from.

## VIII.

### 3 **Collective Transformation:** Building Community Power and Cooperative Culture

- Coordinate with state-level allies of worker cooperatives and strategic partners to facilitate collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and collective advocacy.
- Organize and promote cooperative training programs and workshops to foster cooperative principles and practices.
- Strengthen relationships among worker-owned enterprises and solidarity economy networks through networking events and collaborative projects.

### 4 **Institutional Transformation:** Advocacy for Policy Changes and Governance Practices

- Engage in policy dialogues and advocacy campaigns to promote worker ownership in legislative agendas and economic development strategies.
- Collaborate with municipal and statewide agencies like Massachusetts Center for Employee Ownership to incorporate worker ownership into their policies and programs.
- Develop guidelines and resources for implementing democratic governance practices within worker-owned enterprises.

## VIII.

### Timeline & Key Milestones

#### Year 1 2022/23

- Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment and gap analysis to identify specific challenges and opportunities in the worker ownership ecosystem as per the stakeholders we want to center - worker owners and aspiring worker owners in working class/communities of color.
- Campaign for policy as per the results of this assessment
- Promote leadership from centered groups in movement leadership (our coalition, government offices etc.)
- Implement and share recommendations within our sphere of influence: working groups developing transparent governance agreements for the coalition, and ambassadors sharing our gaps assessment findings for key stakeholder awareness.
- Initiate partnerships with movement organizations to create affordable housing options and provide access to resources that improve quality of life and promote psychological safety for worker owners.

## VIII.

### Year 2 2023/24

- Identify broader stakeholders we need to partner with to implement core elements of our new theory of change coming out of needs assessment year 1; build relationships and collaborations with them.
- Organize regular gatherings and leadership development programs to foster collective decision-making and leadership capacity among worker owners in our coalition.
- Ensure appropriate partners develop and implement cooperative training programs, focusing on cooperative principles, business development, and financial management.
- Advocate for policy changes that support equitable financing terms and access to capital for worker-owned enterprises.

### Year 3 2024/25

- Strengthen collaborations with municipal and statewide agencies to promote worker ownership in economic development strategies and programs.
- Expand outreach and support efforts in marginalized communities, providing mentorship and technical assistance to aspiring worker owners.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of implemented strategies and activities, making adjustments based on feedback and lessons learned.

### VIII.

## Resource Allocation & Budget Considerations

- Allocate resources for staff members dedicated to coordinating and implementing the theory of change strategies and activities.
- Secure funding to support gatherings, workshops, training programs, and mentorship initiatives.
- Secure funding to support the leadership and movement work of worker owners and aspiring worker owners.
- Collaborate with funding organizations and financial institutions to create funding mechanisms tailored to the needs of worker-owned enterprises.
- Seek partnerships with academic institutions, cooperative development centers, and technical assistance providers to leverage existing resources and expertise.
- Mainstream implementation of this work at community level, cooperative business level, coalition level, at different levels of local and state government.
- Regularly assess the budget needs and reallocate resources based on the progress and evolving priorities of the implementation plan.

By following this implementation plan, stakeholders can effectively advance the cause of worker ownership and economic justice, creating an inclusive and thriving ecosystem for worker-owned enterprises in Massachusetts. The plan provides a roadmap for action, ensuring that strategies and activities are implemented in a coordinated and strategic manner to achieve the desired outcomes.



# IX.

## Monitoring & Evaluation

### Indicators for Tracking Progress & Success

#### 1 Personal Change:

- Increased participation and engagement of worker owners in cooperative decision-making processes.
- Improved satisfaction and sense of psychological safety, hope and possibility among worker owners.
- Increased access to affordable housing options for worker owners.

#### 2 Interpersonal Transformation:

- Enhanced leadership skills and capacity among worker owners.
- Increased attendance and active participation in gatherings and cooperative meetings.
- Positive feedback and satisfaction from participants regarding the effectiveness of leadership development programs.



## IX.

### 3 **Collective Transformation:**

- Growth in the number of worker-owned enterprises in Massachusetts, and the number of worker owners from the working class and communities of color.
- Expansion of collaborative partnerships and solidarity networks.
- Increased awareness and understanding of cooperative principles and practices among stakeholders (public exposure to our comms and messaging and narrative)
- Increased engagement of worker owners and aspiring worker owners from working class and communities of color in movement spaces - co-ops, coalitions for change, and in strategic roles in government, civil society and cooperative enterprise.

### 4 **Institutional Transformation:**

- Policy changes or reforms supporting worker ownership and economic justice.
- Adoption of democratic governance practices within worker-owned enterprises.
- Increased representation and participation of worker owners in decision-making processes - including agenda setting and negotiations.

## IX.

### Data Collection Methods & Tools

#### 1 Surveys and Questionnaires:

- Develop and administer surveys to gather feedback and assess the impact of training programs, gatherings, and leadership development initiatives.
- Use questionnaires to collect data on satisfaction levels, perceived changes in knowledge and skills, and overall engagement of worker owners.

#### 2 Interviews and Focus Groups:

- Conduct interviews with key stakeholders, including worker owners, cooperative leaders, policymakers, and community members, to gather qualitative data on their experiences and perceptions.
- Organize focus groups to facilitate in-depth discussions and explore specific topics related to worker ownership and economic justice.

#### 3 Document and Policy Analysis:

- Analyze relevant policy documents, reports, and legislative changes to assess the progress in promoting worker ownership and implementing supportive policies.
- Review cooperative bylaws, governance documents, and meeting minutes to evaluate the adoption of democratic governance practices.

IX.

## Evaluation Framework for Assessing Impact

1

### **Baseline Assessment:**

- Conduct a comprehensive baseline assessment to establish a starting point and gather data on key indicators before implementing the theory of change strategies.

2

### **Ongoing Monitoring:**

- Regularly collect and analyze data using the identified methods and tools to monitor progress, identify challenges, and make necessary adjustments to the implementation plan.

3

### **Mid-term Evaluation:**

- Conduct a mid-term evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the implemented strategies, gather feedback from stakeholders, and identify areas for improvement.

4

### **Final Evaluation:**

- Conduct a comprehensive final evaluation to assess the overall impact of the theory of change initiatives on worker ownership and economic justice in Massachusetts.
- Use a mixed-methods approach to gather qualitative and quantitative data, triangulate findings, and make evidence-based conclusions.

## IX.

# Evaluation Framework for Assessing Impact

### 1 **Baseline Assessment:**

- Conduct a comprehensive baseline assessment to establish a starting point and gather data on key indicators before implementing the theory of change strategies.

### 2 **Ongoing Monitoring:**

- Regularly collect and analyze data using the identified methods and tools to monitor progress, identify challenges, and make necessary adjustments to the implementation plan.

### 3 **Mid-term Evaluation:**

- Conduct a mid-term evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the implemented strategies, gather feedback from stakeholders, and identify areas for improvement.

### 4 **Final Evaluation:**

- Conduct a comprehensive final evaluation to assess the overall impact of the theory of change initiatives on worker ownership and economic justice in Massachusetts.
- Use a mixed-methods approach to gather qualitative and quantitative data, triangulate findings, and make evidence-based conclusions.

By utilizing these monitoring and evaluation strategies, stakeholders can track progress, assess the effectiveness of the theory of change initiatives, and make informed decisions to improve and enhance the implementation plan. The data collected will provide valuable insights into the impact of worker ownership and economic justice efforts, helping to refine strategies, address challenges, and advance the cause in a meaningful and sustainable way.

# X.

## Conclusion

### **Recap of Key Findings & Recommendations**

In this theory of change document, we have explored the critical issues surrounding worker ownership and economic justice in Massachusetts. Through stakeholder engagement, data analysis, and the guidance of movement partners, we have identified key findings and developed recommendations for action.

We have recognized the challenges faced by worker-owned enterprises in accessing financing, building inclusive and accountable cooperatives, promoting education and knowledge sharing, and fostering collaborative partnerships. We have also highlighted the importance of personal, interpersonal, collective, and institutional transformations in advancing the cause of worker ownership and economic justice.

To address these challenges and advance the cause, we have proposed a range of strategies and best practices. These include initiatives to address financing barriers, strengthen inclusivity and accountability within cooperatives, promote education and training, enhance collaborative partnerships, and empower marginalized communities through worker ownership.

### X.

## Call to Action for Stakeholders

We now call upon all stakeholders—worker owners, cooperatives, support organizations, policymakers, and community members—to take action in implementing the recommendations outlined in this document. It is crucial that we work together to create an environment where everyone can access and thrive in worker ownership.

Stakeholders are encouraged to actively engage in workshops, gatherings, and leadership development programs that foster personal and interpersonal transformations. By building psychological safety, improving communication, and nurturing cooperative cultures, we can empower worker owners and promote their active participation in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, stakeholders are urged to collaborate, share resources, and establish partnerships to collectively transform the worker ownership landscape. By advocating for policy changes, adopting democratic governance practices, and promoting the cooperative model, we can create an inclusive and sustainable economy that benefits all.

X.

### **Commitment to Advancing Worker Ownership and Economic Justice**

We, the coalition for worker ownership and power, reaffirm our commitment to advancing worker ownership and economic justice in Massachusetts. We recognize that the journey toward an equitable and inclusive economy requires ongoing effort, collaboration, and learning. We are dedicated to monitoring and evaluating our progress, making adjustments when necessary, and continually improving our strategies and practices.

By implementing the theory of change outlined in this document, we believe that we can create a transformative impact on worker ownership, supporting the growth and success of worker-owned enterprises while advancing economic justice for all. Together, we can build a future where everyone has access to and thrives in worker ownership, creating a more just and sustainable society.

Let us embark on this journey with determination, solidarity, and a shared vision of a more equitable and empowering economic landscape for all workers and communities in Massachusetts.

# XI.

## References

### List of Citations & Sources Consulted during the document Development

Race Forward Guidance: Race Forward Companion Guidance. Retrieved from <https://www.raceforward.org/about/our-theory-change>

Mapping & Taking Inventory of Massachusetts Cooperative Ecosystems. Retrieved from Coalition for Worker Ownership and Power (COWOP) Documents:

- COWOP Membership List and Organizational Profiles. Retrieved from <https://cooperativema.org/cowop-members/>
- Committee Meeting Minutes and Reports
- Monthly Gathering Reports and Feedback
- Working Group Meeting Notes and Recommendations

Rise to own it Resources

- Meeting notes from October 2022 Rise to Own It convening in Springfield, and November 2023 Rise to Own It Convening in Lynn
- Jamboard of participant's feedback on challenges to their cooperatives, and opportunities to grow the cooperative movement in MA
- Synthesis team compilation of Rise to Own It Convenings
- Readings from Tyler Rivera and Boone Shear on the voice of worker owners in the movement, and ways that policy and community can support worker ownership.
- Loomio Poll Results on Worker Owner Policy Priorities



# XI.

## List of COWOP Documents used to gather feedback from participants

### 1 Workshop Reports and Documentation:

- Rise to Own It Workshop Reports. Rise to Own It Summary Report:  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1t-YNrbckKGOyXnIngUWPx3WcnROAx\\_3Bvqg\\_P67S1rVY/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1t-YNrbckKGOyXnIngUWPx3WcnROAx_3Bvqg_P67S1rVY/edit?usp=sharing)
- Workshop Evaluation Forms and Surveys
- Participant Feedback and Testimonials

### 2 COWOP Assessment Reports:

- Racial Equity Assessment Report
- Analysis of Challenges and Opportunities for Worker Ownership in Massachusetts
- Decision tree - guiding principles behind COWOP Initiation from CED:  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1d5cE1fZJzcRbLPlun9ASl2qRRfjgsGJY/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1d5cE1fZJzcRbLPlun9ASl2qRRfjgsGJY/view?usp=drive_link)

### 3 Worker Cooperative Documents:

- Cooperative Bylaws and Governance Documents
- Cooperative Policies and Procedures

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of references and sources. The mentioned documents were instrumental in informing the content and recommendations presented in this theory of change document.

# XII.

## Appendices

### **Stakeholder Engagement Process Details**

This doc contains several appendices with more detailed information about the stakeholder engagement process that was conducted during the development of this theory of change document. It includes a description of the convening, workshops, interviews, and other methods used to gather input from a diverse range of stakeholders. The appendix also includes a summary of the key themes and feedback received during the engagement process:

Rise to Own It report to Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE):  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YuuJTv7KdQSC8YmXWBNDsbylCmgtEKEW/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YuuJTv7KdQSC8YmXWBNDsbylCmgtEKEW/view?usp=drive_link)