



# The People's Economic Forum

**Bringing Economic Democracy to Philadelphia**

Part 2: Powering the Cooperative Economy

February 16, 2023

7pm

Sponsored by

**The Philadelphia Public Banking Coalition,  
Philly Neighborhood Networks, &  
Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance**

## *Part 2: Empowering the Cooperative Economy*

*Emcee*  
**Vanessa Lowe**



Topic	Speaker
Philadelphia Public Banking Update	Nicole Levy
Cooperative Movement, Past and Present	Jamila Medley
Financing Cooperatives	Clark Arrington
Philadelphia Cooperative Context	Alex Stewart
Weavers Way, Mature Cooperative	Jon Roesser
Discussion Q&A	All

***\*Submit your Questions into the Chat for Q&A with all the panelists!***

## Nicole Levy

Fair Banking Advocate



Nicole has a twenty year career working for a Fair Economy.

She is currently working locally as a community advocate in coalition with the **Philadelphia Public Banking Coalition** and the **57 Block Coalition**.



# FINANCING PHILADELPHIA'S FUTURE

NEXT PRESENTATION:

February 28th

**Helen Gym**

Check out [Past Episodes](#) on YouTube.

## Jamila Medley

Organizational Development  
Consultant



For over 20 years, Jamila has supported mission-based organizations in the non-profit and cooperative business sectors.

From 2012-2021, Jamila served in governance roles and then as executive director of the Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance (PACA).

Jamila serves on the boards of directors and advisory committees for several organizations including the Independence Public Media Foundation, Movement Alliance Project, Food Co-op Initiative, and All Together Now PA.

## Clark Arrington

Senior Fellow, SEED Commons



Clark has spent most of his professional life teaching courses related to cooperatives, business law, and community economic development at more than half a dozen institutions in the U.S. and abroad.

As a Senior Fellow at Seed Commons, Clark works to develop nonextractive equity and debt financing that assures cooperative membership and member benefit are at the center of all legal and financial deals.

Clark has played a critical role in leveraging millions of dollars of new investment for social justice cooperatives.

## Alex Stewart

PACA



Alex is a Philadelphia native seeking healing and peace through the struggle for economic and social liberation from exploitative systems.

Alex has been involved with the cooperative economy for over a decade as a freelance developer and through movements such as Occupy Wall Street.

He believes social liberation can only be achieved through economic liberation and that co-ops are valuable tools to enable communities to become thriving and self-determined environments, in which each member is a critical piece of something larger than themselves.



Philadelphia  
Area  
Cooperative  
Alliance

[www.philadelphia.coop](http://www.philadelphia.coop)



# What is a cooperative?

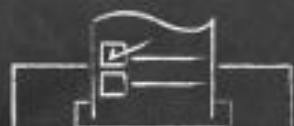


A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons **united voluntarily** to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.

# SEVEN COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES



VOLUNTARY  
**OPEN**  
MEMBERSHIP



DEMOCRATIC  
MEMBER CONTROL

COOPERATION



AMONG COOPERATIVES

**AUTONOMY & INDEPENDENCE**

MEMBER



ECONOMIC  
PARTICIPATION



CONCERN  
FOR THE  
COMMUNITY

EDUCATION



TRAINING AND  
INFORMATION



*Philadelphia's  
Cooperative  
Ecosystem*

## Reading List

**Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land**

by Leah Penniman

**Emergent Strategie: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds**

by Adrienne Maree Brown

**Jackson Rising: The Struggle for Economic Democracy and Black Self-Determination in Jackson, Mississippi**

Edited by Kali Akuno and Ajamu Nangwaya

**Humanizing the economy: co-operatives in the age of capital ...** by John Restakis

**The cooperative solution: how the United States can tame recessions, reduce inequality, and protect the environment**

...by E.G. Nadeau

**Towards Just and Sustainable Economies**

...Edited by Molly Scott Cato & Peter North

**Wired Differently ...**by Vern Dosch

**The Solidarity Economy Alternative: Emerging Theory and Practice**

...Edited by Vishwas Satgar

**Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice ...** by Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembhard

**For all the people: uncovering the hidden history of cooperation, cooperative movements, and communalism in America ...** by John Curl

**Companies we keep: employee ownership and the business of community and place**

...by John Abrams

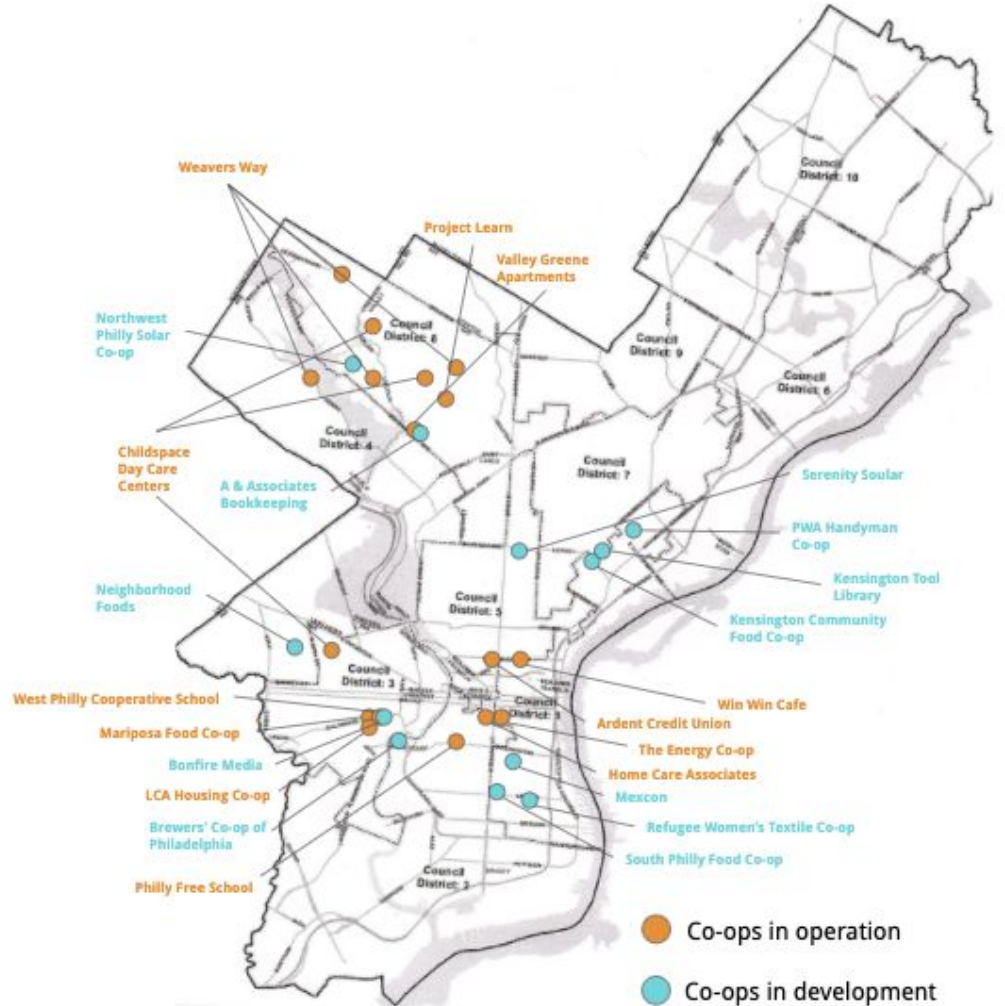
**Building powerful community organizations: a personal guide to creating groups that can solve problems and change the world**

...by Michael Jacoby Brown

**Building co-operative power : stories and strategies from the worker-cooperatives in the Connecticut River Valley**

...by Janelle Cornwell; Michael Johnson; Adam Trott

# Map of Philly Co-ops



# Consumer Cooperatives



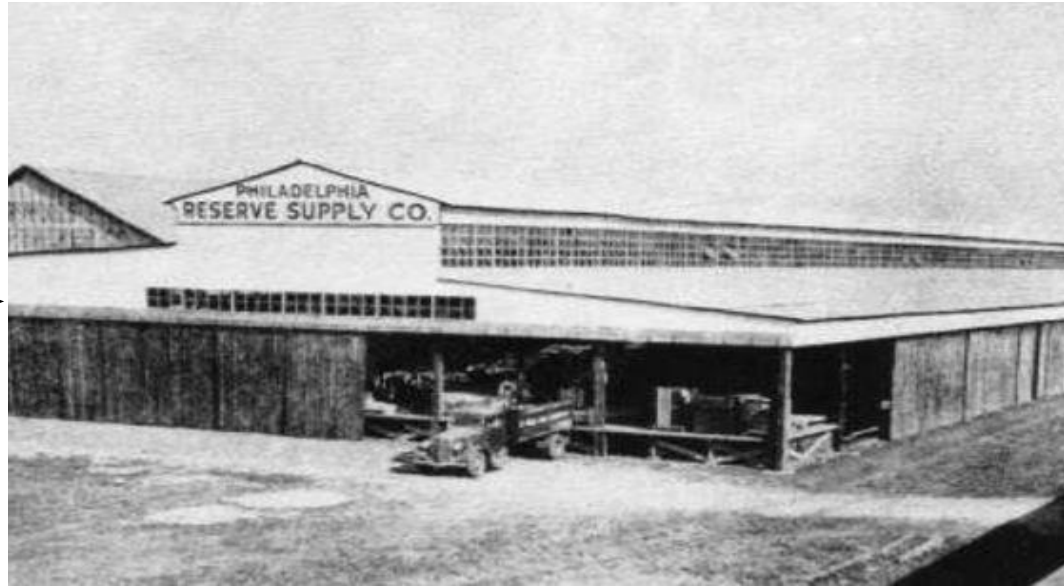
The Life Center Association



# Producer Cooperatives



# Purchasing Cooperatives



**Market  
supplies or  
services**

est. 1930







# Worker Cooperatives

## OBVIOUS



Mount Airy  
Violins & Bows

Catalyst Cooperative



Black and Brown  
WORKERS COOPERATIVE

A & Associates

# Multi-Stakeholder Or Hybrid



## PROJECT LEARN SCHOOL





- **What are the values of the local cooperative ecosystem that we are building?**
- **What are you already doing that is cooperation?**
- **What obstacles do you face to building a cooperative based life and community?**

# PACA

## Resources

### Technical Assistance (TA)

#### WHAT WE OFFER

Technical Assistance Services and Workshops for emerging and established cooperatives

#### Co-op 101

- Co-op history, principles, and values
- Intro to co-ops, mutual aid, and the solidarity economy
- Co-ops and emergent strategy
- Intro to workplace democracy

#### Startup, Operations, and Financial Literacy

- Steps to Startup
- Steps to Feasibility
- Financial Forecasting
- Bookkeeping Basics

#### People Power and Relationship Development

- Participatory Governance
- Participatory Budgeting
- Membership Development
- Member On-boarding

#### Practice for Developers/ Train the Trainers

- Working with co-ops for service providers
- Working with immigrant led co-ops
- Working with Black-led co-ops



#### CONTACT US

Visit PACA's intake page for more detailed service descriptions and rates.

### Study Circles

#### *Study Track:*

works with groups to explore community ownership and cooperative enterprise through study over the course of six months.

#### *Build Track:*

works with groups, from previous Study Circles cohorts, who are interested in continuing to develop their idea with the support of PACA staff through a collaboratively designed TA contract.

### Seed Commons

a national network of locally rooted, non-extractive loan funds that aims to bring the power of big finance under community control.

### Policy & Advocacy

A voice on behalf of co-ops & credit unions with government and the public; promotion of legislative and administrative initiatives to support cooperative businesses and development.

## Jon Roesser Weavers Way



Jon has been the General Manager of Weavers Way Cooperative Association since May, 2015. Jon is committed to expanding the Co-op's reach and impact through expansion. He assisted in expansion of the Co-op to the Chestnut Hill and oversaw the expansion to Ambler.

Jon is a leader in reestablishing the Philadelphia area "food shed" by providing locally-owned and operated food producers with access to the values-driven consumer marketplace. He is also an advocate for a food system that is environmentally and ethically responsible.

## Weavers Way Cooperative Association

- People's economic forum
- February 16, 2023

## OVERVIEW, Part 1

- Consumer-owned Cooperative
- Established in Mt. Airy (NW Philadelphia) in 1973 as a produce buying club
- Organized both as a Pennsylvania Non-Profit Corporation and a Pennsylvania Cooperative
- 11,000+ Member-Owner Households representing 25,000+ individuals
- Stores are open to the public. 79% member shoppers; 21% non-members

## OVERVIEW, Part 2

- Mt. Airy – 3 stores (main store, Across the Way, Mercantile)
- Chestnut Hill (opened 2010) – 2 stores (main store, Next Door)
- Ambler (opened 2017)
- Germantown (anticipated opening date late 2023)
  
- 2 Farms (Awbury Arboretum and Saul High School for Agriculture, approx. 5 acres in total)
- Community Newspaper (The Shuttle, published 10 times annually)
- Warehouse (Erie Ave, Juniata Park)
  
- Annual Revenue approximately \$38 million
- 250 employees
- 300+ local vendors (150 miles from City Hall)



## Fast Growing Out-of-Towners

Philadelphia has historically been dominated by regional chains and franchises (Acme, Shop Rite, Fresh Grocer, IGA, etc.). The marketplace is seeing tremendous outside investment from new competitors fueled by private equity:

- Heirloom & Giant (Ahold Delhaize, market capitalization = \$31.17 Billion)
- The Fresh Market (Cencosud)
- Sprouts Farmers Market
- Aldi & Lidl
- Dollar General & Dollar Tree
- Mom's Organics
- Wegmans
- Whole Foods & Amazon Fresh (Amazon)

## Weavers Way Member Loans have fueled our growth and leveraged additional capital

- Chestnut Hill (2009): \$900,000
- Ambler (2016): \$1.5 million
- Germantown (2022): \$2.2 million

Weavers Way Germantown



## Germantown Project Summary Sources & Uses

### Sources of Financing - \$7.2 Million

- Member Loans \$2.2 million
- Member Equity \$200,000
- Grants (city, state, private) \$1.75 million
- New Market Tax Credits \$900,000
- Bank Financing (PIDC / RF) \$2.15 million

### Uses of Financing - \$7.2 Million

- Building Purchase \$2.5 million
- Construction \$2.5 million
- Equipment \$1.2 million
- Professional Service Fees \$500,000
- Startup costs \$500,000

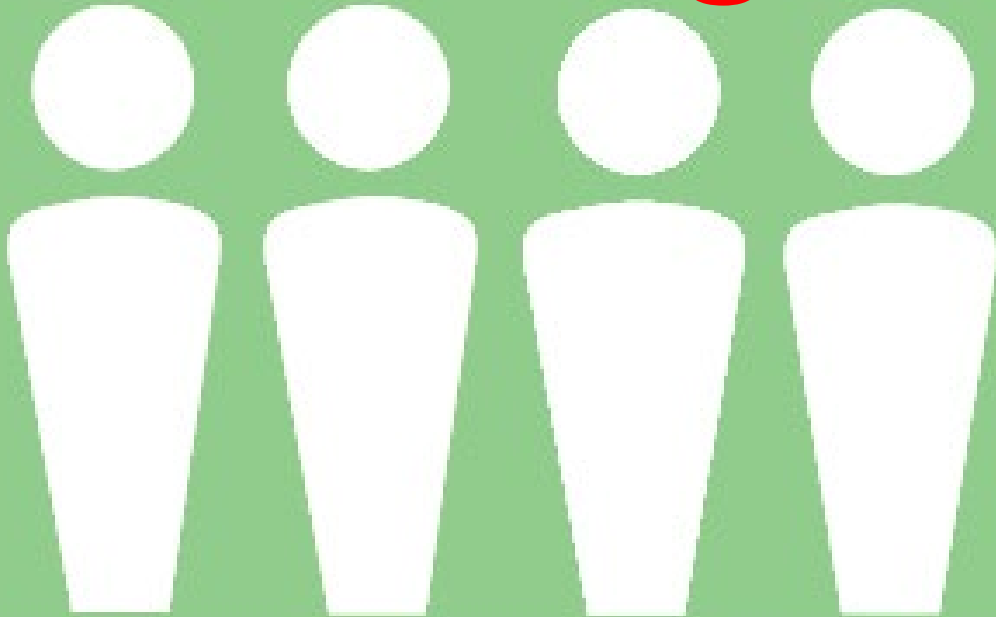
**Email questions / comments:**

**Jon Roesser: [jroesser@weaversway.coop](mailto:jroesser@weaversway.coop)**

## Organizations

- Philadelphia Public Banking Coalition - <https://philapublicbanking.org/>
- Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance - <https://philadelphia.coop/>
- SEED Commons - <https://seedcommons.org/>
- Weaver's Way - <https://weaversway.coop/>
- Jamila Medley Consulting - <https://www.jamilamedley.com/>
- Philly Neighborhood Network - <https://www.phillynn.org/>

**Thanks for  
Coming!**



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