

The Cooperative Principles

from the International Cooperative Alliance

1st Principle: Voluntary and Open membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership without discrimination on the basis of gender or race or due to social or religious affiliations

2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In a primary Cooperative, such as ours, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote).

3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of the capital is usually common property of the cooperative's members. They usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital contributed as a condition of membership.

4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and the maintenance of their cooperative autonomy.

5th Principle: Education, Training & Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively in the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

6th Principle: Cooperation among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, regional, national and international cooperative structures.

7th Principle: Concern for the Community

