

Karen Zimbelman

Candidate Statement

Ownership by co-op members brings a powerful difference to our businesses and to our markets. Through our unique economic model and democratic structure, cooperative businesses bring integrity and economic security to the lives of millions of people and are a needed “force for good” in our world today.

Today, co-ops are poised to be at the forefront of building a more inclusive, just and dynamic economy for all. NCBA CLUSA brings over 100 years of service to the cooperative movement and has profoundly contributed to co-ops worldwide. It is an organization uniquely positioned to help co-ops grow, thrive and increase their vital impact. Every co-op, and each of our co-op sectors, faces periods of strength and challenges. But with a strong and vibrant national association, our co-ops have the leadership to continue to build a strong cooperative economy and weather typical business and market challenges. The national and global reach of NCBA CLUSA provides U.S. co-ops with an important forum for building and strengthening our common bonds.

With its deep roots and a renewed vision for building an inclusive economy, NCBA CLUSA stands as a champion of cooperatives in all forms. But we need our national association to be even more. In these days of growing inequality and a widening wealth gap, we need NCBA CLUSA to find ways and challenge us all to unleash major new initiatives that will support the growth, development and success of co-ops serving all—including, and especially supporting, the economic empowerment that co-ops can offer low-income communities and communities of color.

I've been lucky enough to spend four decades pursuing my personal and professional passion for co-ops in a range of roles—including service as a manager, board member, consultant and just plain member. I've also been honored to serve on the NCBA CLUSA Board of Directors for the past six years and to be elected to serve on the Executive Committee over the past year. As NCBA CLUSA has begun the process of redefining its membership structure in the past year, I've been serving as the co-chair of our Membership Growth Task Force.

I look forward to bringing my passion for co-ops, as well as my vision for the significant and profound impact co-ops can have, to the NCBA CLUSA Board of Directors. We are, indeed, stronger together!