

Paul Bradley

CANDIDATE STATEMENT

Fellow Cooperators:

The issue that inspired me to run in 2019 continues to motivate me, the widening, and deeply troubling wealth gap. That gap has increased interest in cooperative ownership. As a more distributive model of ownership, the attention is rightfully placed. However, as I hear it raised by mission-related grantors and investors, they are asking, “Do co-ops build wealth in low-income communities and communities of color?”

The question is a throw-down challenge to all cooperatives.

In too many cases, the answer is not yet broadly compelling enough. It is not as compelling as it could be or needs to be. I want to join with my colleagues on staff at NCBA, NCBA Directors and NCBA Members and contribute to making our collective case persuasive.

We need to unleash major new investments in co-op development and co-op systems, with particular attention to those that serve low-income communities and communities of color.

I will personally contribute my experience in bringing the co-op model to one sector of low-income communities. For the last 30 years, I have dedicated my professional life to developing a scaled cooperative solution with homeowners in Manufactured (“Mobile”) Home Communities (MHC) that own their homes but rent the land under their homes.

Together with these empowered homeowners and communities, we are correcting an accident of history and transforming an industry through co-op ownership. Over 38 years in New Hampshire, co-op ownership of MHC has grown to 33% market share.

ROC USA® set out to scale co-op MHCs nationally in 2008. After 14 years, we now represent a national network of 290 co-op communities – home to 20,000 largely low-income homeowners – in 20 states. By 2028, we will serve more than 30,000 homeowners.

My vision for NCBA is consistent with the Association’s Mission. I believe NCBA is uniquely positioned and has the obligation to provide leadership in response to this “cooperative moment to shine.” I promise to bring my passion and experience to wealth gap related issues and strategies. I see those strategies already a part of the Association’s focus: research, targeted solution-based storytelling, and advocacy.

I also believe that NCBA Members and the organization itself can play an important role in educating co-op developers and leaders about scale, including scalable business models, infrastructure and markets.

If we're going to step up with solutions in targeted communities, co-op developers and leaders need to think about scale from business planning through to execution and growth. Too few of us co-op developers are sufficiently prepared to tackle community issues with scalable solutions and yet our co-op brethren – fellow Members – know about scale. We all need to up our game because the wealth gap challenge is enormous.

As a NCBA Director, I pledge I will bring my passion and experience for scaling cooperatives. I would be honored to serve a second – ideally post-Covid – term.