

Christina Jennings

CANDIDATE STATEMENT

I am pleased to submit my nomination to serve on the board of directors of NCBA CLUSA. I am the Executive Director of Shared Capital Cooperative, a cooperatively owned, national CDFI loan fund organized by and for the cooperative sector.

At Shared Capital Cooperative, I lead a national cooperative association representing over 300 small and mid-sized cooperatives – especially worker cooperatives, consumer food co-ops, housing cooperatives and others. Our members include well-established cooperatives and start-ups, as well as a growing number of businesses that have recently converted to cooperative ownership by transitioning to worker cooperatives. I believe I can help bring the valuable perspective of our members to NCBA CLUSA's work.

I have strong, relevant cooperative management and governance experience. I bring 25 years of senior organizational management experience. As the Executive Director of Shared Capital Cooperative for the past thirteen years, I have managed a growing cooperative and worked closely with our board of directors as we expanded our geographic service area to become a national organization; undertook a major re-branding and repositioning of the organization; focused on strengthening our cooperative identity and practices; developed creative capital strategies, including preferred shares and a national Direct Public Offering; and worked to deepen our work for racial equity and justice.

I understand cooperative governance and how to be an effective board member. I have served on more than a dozen local and national boards over the past 20 years. Since 2014, I have served on the Cooperative Development Foundation board, where I currently serve as Treasurer. I also currently serve on the boards of directors of a Minneapolis community land trust and Latino Economic Development Center, a Minnesota CDFI.

As we all recognize, we are at in the midst of a unique moment. There is a renewed interest in the cooperative model combined with unprecedented amounts of capital flowing from government, private foundations, and individuals in search of meaningful investments that can have an impact. The cooperative sector will need to wrestle with how we can capture this capital without giving over control of the cooperative to outside investors. Also, how can we move more dollars from cooperatives and their members to support cooperative development? How can we ensure that these investments bring real and sustained change?

We are also at a critical moment where we must reckon with the deep racial, social, and economic inequities of our society. There is an incredible opportunity for cooperatives to lead the way in building a more inclusive and just economy, and I believe NCBA CLUSA has a vital role to play in that effort.

I would welcome the opportunity to serve as a member of the Board of Directors of NCBA CLUSA. Because of my work and my experience, I believe I can bring an important vantage point on these opportunities and challenges facing the cooperative sector. I appreciated your consideration.