

Debbie Wege

CANDIDATE STATEMENT

As a longtime cooperative credit union advocate, I have dedicated my career to advancing the uniqueness of credit unions and cooperatives as viable solutions for an inclusive and fair economy. I believe strongly in the work of the National Cooperative Business Association and their mission to “build a better world and a more inclusive economy that empowers people”.

We are at a critical time in history as we face the deepening impacts of the pandemic and the ongoing division on how to solve for these challenges. I believe many of the solutions to these ailments lie within the cooperative models and principles. NCBA CLUSA is uniquely positioned to engage, spark collaboration, and bring cooperatives together in a way that can highlight the existing working solutions within different sectors and inspire continued positive impacts for many.

As a leader at one of the largest Credit Union Cooperatives in the country, a board chair of the Northwest Cooperative Development Center and my involvement through the National and International Credit Union Development Education (CUDE) program, I bring an informed enthusiasm and perspective that can create a lasting impact to the work and mission of NCBA

I especially believe in NCBA’s Principle 6 initiative, which focuses on encouraging cross-sector collaboration. Throughout my career, I have been involved in this type of work through serving on key nonprofit boards during the formation of a robust partnership between Express Credit Union and BECU, along with other credit unions, nonprofits and credit union service organizations in the Seattle area. In addition, I have advocated for the support of a local start-up food co-op and the unique Coopatopia event in Olympia, Washington over the past several years. The special role that cooperatives play in people’s lives and our communities helps bring balance to the for-profit models. It provides healthy competition in the market and robust opportunities for involvement in human and environmentally centered solutions we can all benefit from. I would happily serve my time with NCBA CLUSA in supporting and advancing these efforts, as I have done the bulk of my career.

Lastly, I have a strong background in philanthropy and community involvement through my previous roles in managing giving and partnering strategies at BECU and my continued service in key nonprofit boards and various fundraising efforts. This gives me both the unique perspective and experience in building community-focused relationships and support.

I excel at collaboration and convening for ideas and building bridges for connection. The very spirit of cooperatives is built upon the idea that we can bring together our diverse ideas, experiences and perspectives to collectively look for mutually beneficial solutions and approaches that bring about long-lasting, impactful change. It would be an honor to serve and promote this work at the level of reach that NCBA CLUSA has.