

ALEX STONE

CANDIDATE STATEMENT

CooperationWorks! (CW) envisions a world in which cooperatives are the bridge to a just and resilient democracy. I've dedicated the last decade to building and empowering this network of skilled cooperative developers because it is a foundational component of a robust cooperative movement that supports the breadth of cooperative enterprises and the communities in which they are rooted. Now, I am honored to put these skills and experience to use as a candidate for the NCBA CLUSA Board of Directors during the International Year of Cooperatives.

I was fortunate to encounter the cooperative model in my youth and witness its transformational power firsthand. I saw students learn how to self-organize to advocate for their needs, and worked with other teenagers to effectively manage an \$8 million organization to ensure we'd have access to affordable, community-centered housing. My time with CW has only affirmed the critical role that cooperatives play in building economies that work for communities, and has given me deeper insight into the pivotal function of strong networks in the ecosystem.

In my role with CooperationWorks, I have developed deep relationships with established cooperative development centers, cooperative funders, and other cooperative support organizations across sectors and in communities of all stripes throughout the country. I have also had the honor of welcoming the next generation of cooperators to the ecosystem through our flagship training program, *The Art and Science of Cooperative Development*, which has trained more than 500 new developers since it was redesigned in 2016. Strong cooperative ecosystems require networks built on trust, reciprocity, and shared values. I'm well positioned to ensure that NCBA-CLUSA and its partners are well connected with cooperative developers – the “boots on the ground” that build the cooperative movement from the ground up. Such a network will be necessary for building the local, regional, and national power needed in the coming years.

With the future of federal funding that supports cooperative enterprise uncertain, it is crucial that NCBA CLUSA use its leadership as the country's apex cooperative association to explore other mechanisms to ensure the continued growth and development of the cooperative movement. While completing my degree at Saint Mary's University, I researched the capacity of the cooperative movement in the US to support its own growth and development through mutualistic funds, which are commonly used among the world's most established and vibrant cooperative ecosystems. Cooperatives thrive in uncertain times. These times demand that the US cooperative movement meet the needs of the moment by embracing cooperation among cooperatives and concern for community.

As an NCBA CLUSA board member I will utilize my connections with local developers and national partners, my organizational development skills, and nearly two decades of experience with cooperatives across sectors to support and protect cooperative enterprise as a means of inclusive economic development that roots power in communities.