



Legislation Text

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Declaring 2025 as the Year of Cooperatives in Philadelphia and calling on the City of Philadelphia to explore all options to support the development and resilience of local cooperative businesses.

WHEREAS, Cooperatives, or “co-ops,” are businesses that are owned and democratically controlled by their members - those who own the business, use its services, or buy its goods - which range in size from the local corner store to Fortune 500 companies, restaurants, grocery stores, utilities, and credit unions; and

WHEREAS, Cooperatives create inclusive economic participation by empowering individuals through shared ownership and democratic decision-making and ensuring that residents have a direct stake in both the success of their businesses and communities and the profits of their labors; and

WHEREAS, Cooperatives act as anchor businesses in the community, allowing profits to be equitably re-circulated to local stakeholders, and provide a stable source of jobs and wealth across generations; and

WHEREAS, Cooperatives further build entrepreneurship through their investments in their workforce to build business and financial skills, and cultivate local leaders who steward their business and community for the long term; and

WHEREAS, Research proves that cooperatives also retain workers longer than traditional businesses, driven in part because cooperatives provide higher wages, more flexible working hours, better benefits than typical businesses, and are more in-tune with worker needs and the evolving needs of modern businesses; and

WHEREAS, The average Philadelphian interacts with cooperatives on a regular basis, with the Philadelphia area holding more than 100 cooperatives, ranging from food cooperatives to housing cooperatives, credit unions, and many others; and

WHEREAS, The number of cooperatives continues to grow annually due to both new start-up cooperatives and the conversion of existing businesses into cooperatives; and

WHEREAS, Cooperatives also offer business succession assistance by providing a collective structure that allows employees or community members to take over ownership and decision-making responsibilities. This ensures stability and business viability through times of transition while enabling them to maintain their values and mission; and

WHEREAS, Profitable businesses and the jobs they provide are saved when retiring owners sell to their employees through a worker cooperative or an employee stock ownership plan. As thousands of business owners of the Boomer Generation retire, cooperatives provide an excellent opportunity for succession planning that retains local ownership and wealth-building potential; and

WHEREAS, Large cities like New York NY, Chicago IL, and Madison WI are all investing in programs focused on strategic outreach, community education, legislative support, and technical and financial assistance

to support cooperatives in their mission to build equitable wealth across the community; and

WHEREAS, Various tools and resources are available to the City to support new and existing Cooperatives, including research, technical assistance, contractor preferences, and the establishment of relationships with anchor institutions; and

WHEREAS, In particular, the Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance and The Welcoming Center provide extensive technical support to developing cooperatives in the Philadelphia area and are central drivers of the local cooperative movement; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia demonstrates its commitment to cooperatives by joining the global proclamation of the United Nations General Assembly designating 2025 as the Year of Cooperatives. Alongside the UN, we recognize that cooperatives promote participation in the development of local communities and of all people, including women, individuals with disabilities, people of color, and Indigenous Peoples, whose inclusion strengthens economic and social development; and

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby declare 2025 as the Year of Cooperatives in Philadelphia and calls on the City of Philadelphia to explore all options to support the development and resilience of local cooperative businesses.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance, further showing the Philadelphia City Council's commitment to building its cooperative network.