

Doing Business Together



Considering the Cooperative Model
June 2018



Texas Rural Cooperative Center

The Texas Rural Cooperative Center (TRCC) provides assistance to rural start-up and existing cooperatives in Texas. TRCC is operated by the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and funded by the USDA.



The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley
Center for Rural Advancement

Austin Cooperative Business Association

The Austin Cooperative Business Association works to Build and Expand the Cooperative Economy in Central Texas.



A Co-op is a values-based business owned and controlled by the people who use it.





Members are the people who operate, use and invest in the Co-op business for their mutual benefit.

Do You Recognize These Cooperatives?





Types of Cooperatives

- 
- Consumer
 - Purchasing
 - Marketing
 - Worker-owned
 - Housing
 - Credit Unions

Consumer-owned Cooperatives

Consumer-Owned Co-ops
in Austin:



- Access to goods or services
- Commitment to values
- Grocery Co-ops and Utility Co-ops are the emblematic example

Marketing Cooperatives

Local Examples



- Makers or producers seeking to increase sales
- May share branding
- Could be brick-and-mortar, online, and/or design and marketing services
- Agricultural co-ops are emblematic

Housing Cooperatives

Local Examples:

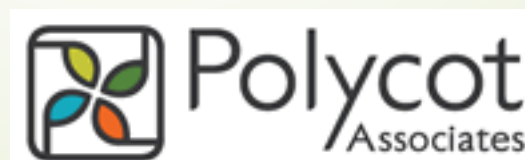


- Affordability and Community are often paramount
- May include shared common space and/or services
- University Housing Co-ops and NYC apartment ownership are emblematic



Worker-owned Cooperatives

Local Examples



- Focus on Worker rights and Fair Wages
- Conversions mitigate start-up challenges
- Low-wage hourly work especially appealing
- Domestic workers' co-ops and restaurants are emblematic



Credit Unions

Local Examples



- Bank-like financial institutions
- Often focused on local lending and investment

Why Co-op?

Groups choose the co-op model to:



- Access Goods or Services Not Otherwise Available
- Keep Local Resources in Community
- Tax Advantages
- Commitment to Democracy and Social Justice
- Build Communities

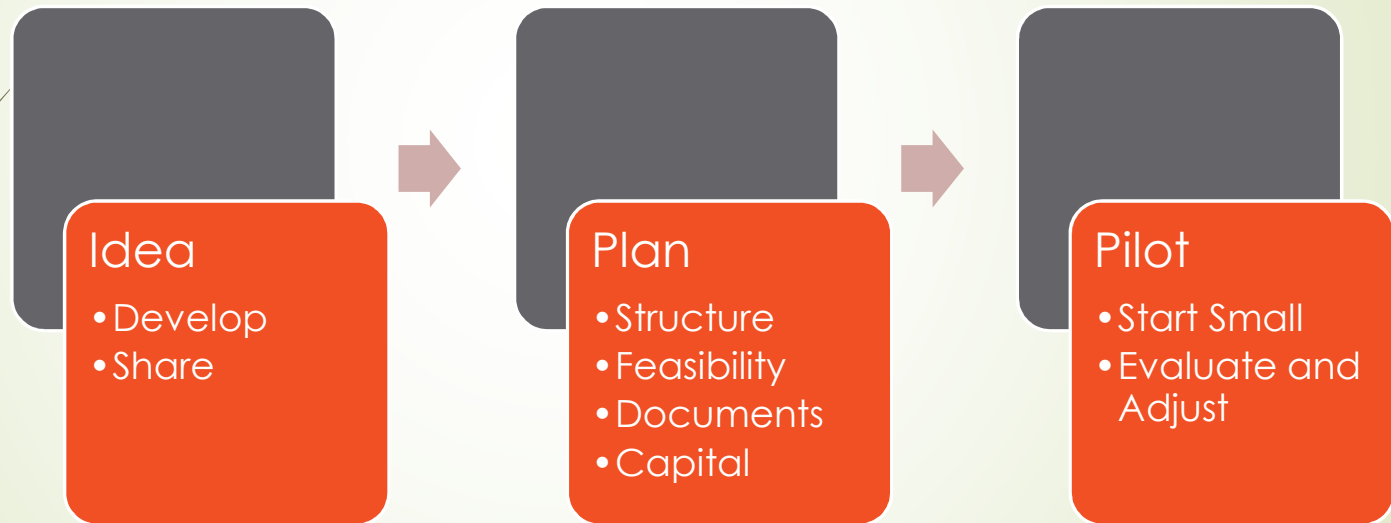
Co-op Challenges

- Access to Capital
- Perception of Complexity
- Only as good as Members demand
- Member Capacity
 - Time
 - Expertise
 - Capital
 - Enthusiasm





A Co-op Startup Roadmap





Brief Overview of Texas Co-op Laws

- Business Ops Code Chapter 251 or Agricultural Code Chapter 52 (51)
- Must be incorporated under one of these to call self a Co-op
- Provides general rules about Board Jobs, Bylaws, Reporting Requirements, and Profit Sharing
- 5-Member Board required for incorporation



Resources

Technical Assistance

Texas Rural Cooperative Center

Education, Training, Networking and Advocacy

Austin Cooperative Business Association & Foundation

Online

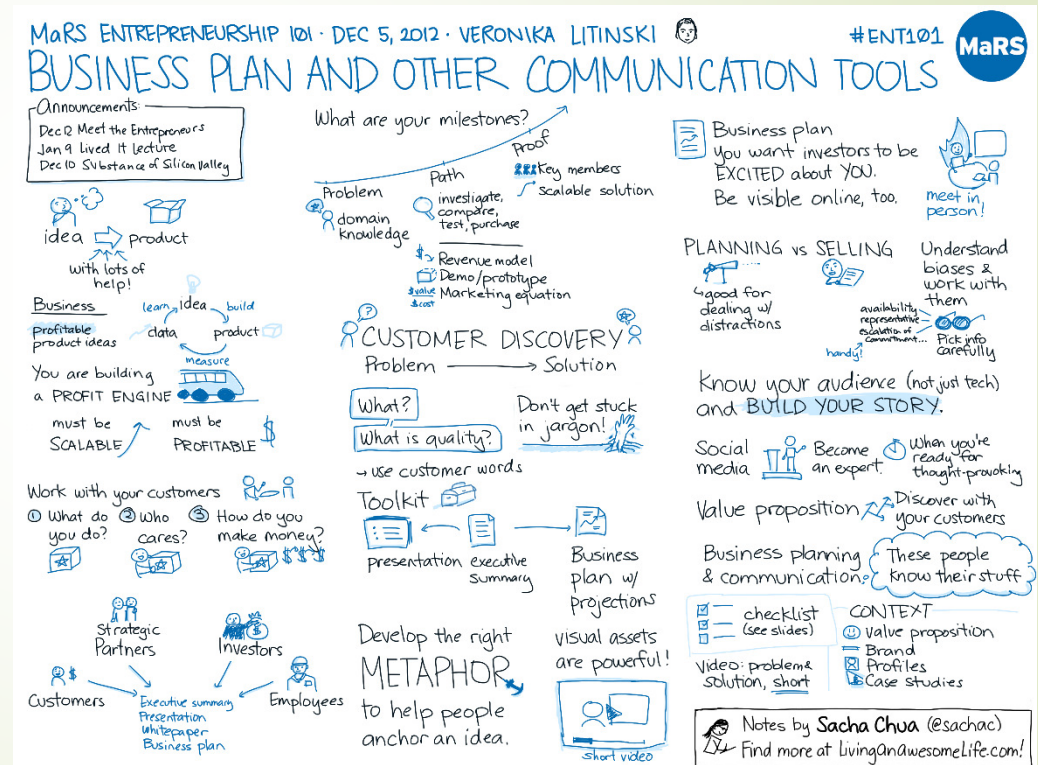
NCBA.coop National Cooperative Business Association

DAWI.coop Democracy at Work Institute

FCI.coop Food Co-op Initiative

Technical Assistance and Training from the Texas Rural Cooperative Center

- Feasibility Studies
- Formation
- Business Plans
- Marketing Plans
- Capitalization Strategies
- Applications for Funding
- Meeting Facilitation





Get Involved with ACBA and ACBF

- **Outreach** - Plan events, create content for communications, and make sure local co-ops know we're there to support them!
- **Business Advocacy** – Help create local and municipal rules that support and encourage empowering, mutually-owned businesses.
- **Housing Advocacy** – Work closely with the City of Austin to develop policies and programs which strategically deploy limited resources to effectively harness the power of cooperatives.
- **Education** - If you love thinking, discussing and teaching others about cooperatives, we'd love to have your energy and enthusiasm on the Education Committee.



Contact

Annelies Lottmann
Cooperative Development Specialist
Texas Rural Cooperative Center
E-mail: Annelies.Lottmann@utrgv.edu

Austin Cooperative Business Association
E-mail: info@acba.coop