



# Co-ops for Community

## An Educational Activity For Youth

### ..... Guide for Youth Group Leaders and Parents .....

“Cooperation” is a term that young people are taught early in their lives. We encourage them to work together – even play together as teams – so they can accomplish shared goals and win competitions. This ability to work together should stay with them for the rest of their lives. Now, imagine a business model that is built around those same principles of cooperation rather than profit! A business where there is shared ownership and each member has a voice in major decisions about the business. It’s the co-operative business model and there are almost 40,000 of them in the U.S. economy alone.

**The “Co-ops for Community” Patch Program includes an engaging mix of learning opportunities – Internet research and group activities are combined with field trips to local co-operatives, and even the opportunity for the group to create its own co-op business. The booklet for the patch program provides parents and group leaders with a range of activities from which to choose, as well as guidance on which activities are appropriate for different age groups. Once the program has been completed, participants will each receive a “Co-ops for Community” patch from Cabot Creamery Co-operative.**

We hope you’ve learned about this program because a co-operative in your community reached out to you and invited your youth group to participate. Co-operatives across the country already are doing wonderful work with a wide array of youth groups such as Boy and Girl Scout programs, 4-H programs, and Boys and Girls Clubs. We’re delighted to now make this new “Co-ops for Community” program available *free of charge* to our fellow co-operatives as an additional educational tool for explaining the co-op business model to young people in their communities.

As a group leader or parent, we’re pleased to assure you that the “Co-op for Community” activity booklet (downloadable at Cabot’s website [cabotcheese.coop/community-scout-patch-program](http://cabotcheese.coop/community-scout-patch-program)) has all the information you’ll need to lead the group through the Patch Program. We have highlighted some of the important elements of the program, but we are available to answer any questions you may have:

- **Tips on how to connect with local co-operatives**

While it would be marvelous to have a local co-operative as a sponsor at the very beginning, the program is designed to enable groups to find the co-operatives in the community on their own. If you aren’t already working with a local co-operative that’s also sponsoring the “Co-ops for Community” Patch Program, the booklet has information that will make it relatively easy to identify local co-operatives. Not all businesses will have “co-operative” in the name of the business, so your group may be surprised at the number of co-operatives you’ll find are located in your community. Once the group has identified local co-ops, you’ll have to decide which co-op(s) the group would like to visit. That co-op may not be familiar with the “Co-ops for Community” Patch Program, so you should be prepared to tell them about the program and invite them to partner with your group to do some of the activities.





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- **Activities are for all age groups**

The Patch Program has been designed for kids from the ages of 7 and above. The booklet contains a list of 16 Activities that will provide them with a great opportunity to learn about how co-operatives function.

- Activities 1, 2 & 3 should be done by all participants, regardless of age.
- Ages 7 – 9 will complete 2 additional Activities, for a total of 5
- Ages 9 – 11 will complete an additional 5 Activities, for a total of 8
- Ages 11 – 16 will complete an additional 7 Activities, for a total of 10

Each activity includes tips for group leaders/parents and an explanation on what's involved with that particular activity.

- **Resources for information about co-operatives**

There is a comprehensive list of resources throughout the booklet that should make it possible for participants to get answers to most questions. A guide for finding this information can be found on Page 4 of the booklet. We encourage groups to do your own exploration for information, but the booklet is a comprehensive source of background information and tips on where to find more information about co-operatives. If you're partnering with a local co-operative, they also will have access to additional information about their specific type of co-op that will be useful to the group. Please let us know if you have additional questions.

- **Setting up a co-operative (Activity #15)**

We hope that many groups will select Activity #15 and decide to establish their own co-operative businesses. If you have a local co-operative working with the group we're sure they would enjoy being advisors to the group in guiding them through many of the organizational issues. The survey that groups are asked to complete (on page 4) includes a request for a brief description of the co-op that they created.

- **What to do when the group has completed all the Activities**

Once the group has finished its activities, each participant qualifies to receive a "Co-ops for Community" patch. The very last piece of business is an online survey for the group leader to complete. The link and website address of the survey, as well as instructions for group leaders/parents can be found on Page 4 of the booklet.

There's no more powerful recommendation than a positive testimonial from someone who has completed the program. For that reason, we ask group leaders and participants to share their experience on social media. We provide a variety of social media posts both in the booklet and on our Community Patch Program page, located at [cabotcheese.coop/community-scout-patch-program](http://cabotcheese.coop/community-scout-patch-program)

For more information about "Co-ops for Community" please contact Amanda Schlott, at [healthinfo@cabotcheese.coop](mailto:healthinfo@cabotcheese.coop)

**We look forward to a full report on your experience!**  
**We welcome your feedback on what we can do to make it even better!**

**Connect with Cabot:**

