



Co-ops for Community

An Educational Activity For Youth

..... Guide for Co-operatives Interested in Participating

Summary: 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, and guidance on which activities are appropriate for different age groups. Once the Program has been completed, each participant will receive a “Co-ops for Community” patch.

All across the country, there are marvelous examples of the co-operative community’s involvement in youth programs. Some of you have been working for years with local youth groups as well as with local affiliates of national organizations, like Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, 4-H programs and Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Others of you are newly established co-operatives who are just now beginning to develop community programs. We honor the work you’re all doing and celebrate the impact you’re having in community and youth engagement!

We’re delighted to offer you an exciting tool to add to your community engagement toolbox. It’s the new “Co-ops for Community” program developed by Cabot Creamery Co-operative and the National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International (NCBA CLUSA). This *free* program is available to download from Cabot’s Education website, located at cabotcheese.coop/community-scout-patch-program

Many of you already are working with youth organizations in your community. Think about expanding that work to include sponsorship of the “Co-ops for Community” Patch Program. Feel free to supplement the booklet with your own materials that tell your own co-op’s story. If you already have programs that teach young people about co-operatives, tell us about them! Hopefully the materials in this Patch Program are good additions to whatever you’re already doing. We’d also like to hear about how you customize the “Co-ops for Community” patch program to serve your specific audiences.

- Post information about the patch program on your website and encourage your members to suggest local youth organizations who might be interested in participating in “Co-ops for Community”.
- Be prepared for inquiries from representatives of youth organizations that may have learned about “Co-ops for Community” from their own national organizations. We’ll be making the national leadership of the major youth organizations aware of this Patch Program and it’s quite possible that they will share that information throughout their grassroots networks of volunteers and group leaders.
- Talk to the youth organizations with which you’re already working, to see if they would be interested in participating in “Co-ops for Community”. It could add a new dimension to activities that they already enjoy doing with your organization.





Co-ops for Community: An Educational Activity For Youth Guide for Co-operatives Interested in Participating

If you don't currently sponsor programs with youth groups, "Co-ops for Community" can be a wonderful opportunity to get started. It's a free educational activity that is consistent with youth organization programming that's designed to teach young people about the world around them. There are many educational and non-profit organizations that do this work in the community, but several of the largest and most visible ones are: Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, and 4-H.

A couple things to know about "Co-ops for Community" ...

- **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. All age groups complete 3 core Activities; the youngest kids can choose 2 additional Activities, with the oldest kids selecting 7 additional Activities. Each Activity includes tips for group leaders/parents and a brief explanation of the purpose of that particular activity.
- **Tours of co-operatives are part of the program.** Activity #2 involves a visit to a co-operative and the opportunity to ask questions (suggested questions on Page 10 of the booklet). While this activity is a requirement for all age groups, there are no limitations on the number of co-ops the group may choose to visit. You may already give lots of tours to community and youth groups; however these tours are supposed to focus on what makes co-operatives different from other forms of businesses. So, be prepared to discuss governance and members' economic participation in the co-operative.
- **It's an opportunity to serve as a resource for information about co-operatives.** If you're partnering with the group, you'll be an important source of information about your co-op sector. For broader information about co-operatives, you'll see that you don't have to serve as the only source of information on co-operatives. There are links to many good 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.
- **It's an opportunity to serve as advisors in 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're working with the group, we're sure they would enjoy having you as advisors in guiding them through many of the organizational issues.

For more information about "Co-ops for Community" please contact Amanda Schlott, at 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:



cabotcheese.coop