



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 18-6145, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF WORKER COOPERATIVES IN COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

**WHEREAS**, a “worker cooperative” is a business that is cooperatively owned and controlled by its workers; and

**WHEREAS**, the worker cooperative model has proven to be an effective tool for creating and maintaining sustainable, dignified jobs; generating wealth; improving the quality of life of workers; and promoting community and local economic development, particularly for people who lack access to conventional means of business ownership; and

**WHEREAS**, many worker cooperatives in the United States today were designed to improve low-wage jobs and build wealth in communities most directly affected by inequality; and

**WHEREAS**, a 2009 University of Wisconsin study reported that there are an estimated 350 worker cooperatives throughout the country with a combined estimated total revenue of \$365 million, and it is believed these estimates are much larger today; and

**WHEREAS**, the local economy has lost thousands of well-paying manufacturing jobs that have mostly been replaced by minimum or low-wage service industry work and has expanded barriers to economic mobility for people of color, returning citizens, and immigrants; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a growing number of worker cooperatives throughout Cook County that currently lack access to capital, public awareness of the worker cooperative model, training and support services, and also face significant legal complexity; and

**WHEREAS**, the mandate of the Cook County Bureau of Economic Development includes fostering business growth, attraction, and retention; supporting workforce development, job creation, and sustainable employment; and, encouraging sustainable community investment; and

**WHEREAS**, worker cooperatives employ less common governance and financial structures, and because the County currently lacks programming and resources to help these beneficial enterprises thrive; now, therefore,

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners supports the development and growth of worker cooperatives; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners celebrates the tremendous benefits of worker cooperatives in Cook County and supports the movement to create more worker cooperatives throughout the region; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Cook County Bureau of Economic Development is encouraged to consider use of community development block grant (CDBG) funding where appropriate and other appropriate sources of funding to support local worker cooperatives and cooperative conversions, strengthen existing organizations that are incubating and training worker cooperatives in Cook County, and help to equip other organizations to provide such services, focusing on services to low income residents or in underserved areas; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Bureau of Economic Development is encouraged to help worker cooperatives access tailored resources created by community organizations and make referrals to technical assistance providers for individuals seeking to launch new worker cooperatives or convert conventional businesses to worker ownership, as well as seek opportunities to partner with worker cooperative initiatives such as the Chicagoland Cooperative Ecosystem Coalition on worker cooperative education initiatives; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, it is recommended that educational materials produced to serve as a resource for worker cooperatives and data on related outreach and funding be made publicly available on an annual basis where appropriate as determined by the partnerships created through this effort; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the federal, state and city of Chicago governments are encouraged to take steps to support worker cooperatives.