



## **State and Federal Legislative and Executive Action Opportunities**

### **Primary Public Policy Benefit - Brief Summary**

Public policy makers have a vital stake in fostering a healthy relationship between productivity gains and personal income, and more generally, in reducing income inequality and the concentration of power it often represents. In the midst of an increasingly centralized and unequal online economy, platform cooperatives (PCs) are online businesses that share ownership, governance, and profits far more equitably among users and workers. They are also a powerful new way to address growing concerns about data privacy, cybersecurity, and the inappropriate use of secret algorithms through transparent, shared governance procedures. PCs are building a new digital public square, one where the benefits of modern internet technologies support jobs and economic growth without the dangerous centralization of power that threaten democracy and the common good. Policy makers can support the fast-growing Platform Cooperative movement and ensure that the thriving online economy shares its benefits more equitably in local communities.

#### **Early leadership opportunities include:**

- Conduct public hearings in the U.S. Capitol, in state Capitols, and in local communities on the long-term impact of the sharing economy and cooperative models on the economy at large.
- Host or sponsor Platform Cooperative organizing meetings that bring together small business owners, software developers, unions, and others to explore sustainability plans for local cooperative ventures that benefit the local economy.
- Incentivize the production of open-source technologies that can be freely used or licensed by many co-ops in multiple localities.
- Sponsor legislation that provides vendor preferences to worker-owned, cooperatively-run businesses in government procurement policies.
- Collaborate with the Platform Cooperatives Consortium at The New School to conduct site visits, ride-alongs, or meet and greet sessions with workers in cooperatively run businesses, platform cooperative developers, entrepreneurs, and supporters.
- Make annual or monthly awards to cooperatively-run businesses, including platform co-ops.
- Accelerate local economic growth by providing funds for academic and field-based peer-reviewed research that identifies sectors where platform cooperatives, and cooperative businesses more generally, are best positioned to thrive.
- Sponsor legislation that creates a revolving loan fund for locally-based platform cooperative technical assistance, to be allocated to uses such as the provision of legal, accounting, business advisory and shared technology development services.
- Provide funding to establish an academic center of excellence in the formation and continuous improvement of cooperatively-run businesses, including platform co-ops (e.g., <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/36/11/40>).
- Provide matching funds and other economic incentives that support both the modernization of existing cooperatives into PCs while also providing new incentives that encourage startups to organize themselves as cooperatives. (e.g. tax abatements for cooperatively-owned firms).

#### **For additional information, please contact:**

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