

## Program Manager: Local Business Conversion Initiatives

The Democracy at Work Institute (DAWI) seeks an experienced, self-directed, and collaborative person to join our dynamic national organization supporting the field of worker cooperative development.

### Position Description

The *Program Manager for Local Business Conversion Initiatives* works intensively with stakeholders around the country to catalyze business conversions to cooperative ownership in key cities and states, focusing on minority business owners and businesses with majority minority workforces. This full-time national position is part of the Conversions Program, a national initiative to scale democratic employee ownership of small business. We seek a communicator who can explain and normalize employee-ownership business forms to a variety of audiences through a variety of means; a technical expert who can advise business service providers on the adoption of best practices; and an organizer who can see opportunities and build relationships.

### Duties

#### Business Support & Conversions Proof of Concept

- Increase the pipeline for conversions through outreach to business owners and employees, normalizing worker ownership as a concept and opportunity.
- Provide succession planning guidance and preparation to business owners exploring conversion. Provide technical assistance to businesses at all stages of the conversions process.
- Ensure the successful conversion of one proof of concept business to a worker cooperative in at least 3 key cities.

#### Field Capacity Building

- Provide training to build the capacity of local business service providers to become cooperative conversion guides.
- Provide partners with tools and materials on worker ownership, policy, ecosystem analysis, collective impact.
- Connect local actors and converted businesses to the national network of worker cooperative professionals.

#### Ecosystem Building

- Work with DAWI staff, local actors and national partner organizations to develop working groups in 3 cities to build a supportive ecosystem for conversions. Bring a strategic and collaborative approach to engaging economic developers, policy makers, business associations, government agencies, and educational institutions.
- Refine place-based strategies for conversions of businesses with substantial minority workforces. Build relationships with minority business owners and majority minority workplaces, chambers of commerce, business associations.

#### Communications & Public Relations

- Outreach and present to economic development officials, small business support centers, and other stakeholder groups as well as attend partners' events and conferences as relevant.
- Refine and support local, regional, and national communications and messaging of the initiative and the stories of the completed proof of concept conversions.
- Communicate lessons learned to the worker cooperative and economic development field as appropriate.
- Respond to inquiries and requests for information about the initiative.

**Reports to:** Conversions Program Director(s)

**Commitment:** This is a full-time exempt position. A substantial amount of travel is expected.

**Compensation:** DAWI offers competitive compensation commensurate with experience, full health benefits coverage, a generous time-off policy, and a highly participatory, mutually supportive workplace. We are committed to the personal and professional growth of all staff.



## Qualifications

- **Minority-owned business advising experience:** 4+ yrs. experience working with any small businesses. Understanding of small business financing, investment and capital needs is required. Prior work with minority owned businesses, business owners and workers of color is required. Experience providing technical assistance to businesses, advising on succession plan options to owners, and holding existing relationships with business service providers is preferred but not required.
- **Worker ownership:** Interest in worker cooperatives and other democratic employee ownership structures is required; experience with these business models is strongly preferred. You must be willing to become fluent in the basics of cooperative business functions (business planning and feasibility, equity and capital structures, governance and management functions, etc.) in order to communicate about them knowledgeably to a variety of audiences.
- **Community economic development:** Background in economic development, community economic development, urban planning, municipal policy is strongly preferred.
- **Communication and training:** Excellent written and verbal communication skills are required, including presentation and training skills, and familiarity with participatory and popular education. Strong phone skills and ability to build relationships remotely are key to success in this position.
- **Diplomacy and discretion:** Strong diplomatic skills and judgment are required in this position. You need to be able to both see possibility and ask hard questions with respect and discretion.
- **Cultural competency:** Experience with on the ground organizing and relationship building among communities of color is required. Must be able to communicate with a broad range of people and institutions confidently and effectively, with a critical analysis of power, privilege, race, class and gender.
- **Self-management:** Our staff is highly autonomous. You should be a self-starter, comfortable taking initiative, scoping projects, managing priorities and time, and holding yourself accountable to realistic goals, with the support of co-workers committed to your success. Experience with multi-phase project management is required.
- **Travel:** Must be able and willing to travel within the U.S. 1-2 times/month, often multi-city or for extended periods.

**About the Institute:** The Institute is a 501(c)3 nonprofit movement-based think-and-do tank that expands the promise of cooperative business ownership to communities most directly affected by social and economic inequality. We do research and advocacy; we develop tools and strategy; and we build cooperative development capacity to ensure that further growth in the worker cooperative movement is rooted in worker cooperatives themselves and reaches out to new communities of worker-owners, particularly low-income people, people of color and recent immigrants. We come out of and retain close ties to the US Federation of Worker Cooperatives, the national grassroots membership organization. All programs integrate USFWC member input and foreground the experience of worker cooperatives.

**About Being on Staff:** All staffers are expected to help build organizational capacity, including strategizing around program development, developing documentation, supporting communications and participating in professional development trainings. We are a remote organization, with staff around the country. A certain amount of travel for all staffers will be expected and supported. Ability and willingness to learn the technological tools for remote working is also expected. We aim to build a multi-racial and class-diverse staff that reflects the future of worker cooperatives. Women, people of color and others who may be underrepresented at senior levels of the nonprofit workforce are strongly encouraged to apply. Full-time staff are eligible for membership in the organization after a year of employment. Members are eligible to serve on the Board of Directors, elect two Directors, and participate in the strategic guidance of the organization.

**How to Apply:** Email a resume, 2 references, and a cover letter to [hire@institute.coop](mailto:hire@institute.coop). Cover letters should be addressed to Melissa Hoover and include a 2-3 paragraph statement of interest describing how your skills and experiences qualify you for the position. Include the subject line "Application for Program Manager for Local Business Conversion Initiatives." All materials must be submitted in PDF format. **Applications are due September 30, 2017.** The position is open until filled.

