



Join the Online Training Program for Co-operative Developers



Option A:

Take the full two-year certificate program, be matched with a co-op development mentor and join a community of other students.

Option B:

Pick and choose which courses interest you, and individually add CoopZone courses to your professional development plan.

Option C:

Reach out to us for customized training courses and webinars.



Instructor	Cohort	Class	Course	Part A	Part B
Christine Clarke	2025-2027	1	Introduction to Co-operative Development: Principles, Practices and a Movement Toward Transformative Change	September 3 2025 9:00 am Pacific	October 1 2025 9:00 am Pacific
Denyse Guy	2025-2027	2	Making It Work: Incorporating and Associating	November 5 2025 12:00 pm Eastern	December 3 2025 12:00 pm Eastern
Melanie Conn and Zoë Creighton	2025-2027	3	A Deep Dive into the Anatomy and Adaptability of the Co-op Structure	January 7 2026 9:00 am Pacific	February 4 2026 9:00 am Pacific
Russ Christianson	2025-2027	4	Money Matters: Financial Systems, Reporting and Co-op Capital	March 4 2026 11:00 am Central	April 8 2026 11:00 am Central
Jennifer Tan, Ashley Grewal and Lissette Lemus	2025-2027	5	Co-operating on Climate: Co-ops and the Climate Emergency	September 3 2026 9:00 am Pacific	October 1, 2026 9:00 am Pacific
Russ Christianson	2025-2027	6	Financial Modeling and the Triple Bottom Line: Essential Tools for Co-operative Enterprises	November 5, 2026 12:00 pm Eastern	December 3, 2026 12:00 pm Eastern
Melanie Conn and Zoë Creighton	2025-2027	7	Walking the Talk: Implementing Democratic Principles in Co-ops	January 7, 2027 9:00 am Pacific	February 4, 2027 9:00 am Pacific
Bill Granger	2025-2027	8	Co-operative Development as a Practice and a Profession	March 4, 2027 11:00 am Central	April 8, 2027 11:00 am Central

Course Descriptions and Dates

coopzone.org

Introduction to Co-operative Development: Principles, Practices and a Movement Toward Transformative Change

Take a historical and contemporary look at the role of co-operatives among various cultures and social classes.

Explore the relevance of co-ops, economic democracy, participatory decision-making, collective care and more:

- How we can **resist the exploitative aspects of capitalism** and instead **empower workers, consumers, producers and community**
- How we ensure **equity and inclusion** in our **organizing and organizational structures**
- How to centre and support a “**nothing for us, without us**” approach to building **community-led solutions**

This insightful and engaging course lays the foundation for the Co-op Developer online training program.

Part A: **Wednesday, September 3, 2025**

9:00 am Pacific

Assignment due: September 17, 2025

Part B: **Wednesday, October 1, 2025**

9:00 am Pacific

Assignment(s) due: October 15, 2025

**Facilitated by
Christine Clarke**



Course Descriptions and Dates

coopzone.org

Making it Work: Incorporating and Associating

This course is your one-stop-shop to understanding:

- The **roles, rights, and responsibilities** in a co-operative
- The **incorporation process** for co-op enterprises
- The roles of the **regional, national, and international apex multi-sectoral and federations** of co-operative organizations and how they support co-operative development
- The role of **governance and management** in co-ops
- The importance of **accountability and transparency** for co-operative governance and management
- The **policy development** process, including issue identification, issue analysis, data collection, development of solutions, and **performance measurement**

Part A: **Wednesday, November 5, 2025**

12:00 pm Eastern

Assignment due: November 19, 2025

Part B: **Wednesday, December 3, 2025**

12:00 pm Eastern

Assignment(s) due: December 17, 2025

**Facilitated by
Denyse Guy**



Course Descriptions and Dates

coopzone.org

A Deep Dive Into the Anatomy and Adaptability of the Co-operative Structure

Join this course with Melanie and Zoë to:

- Understand the **different types of co-ops** and the difference in process between supporting co-op development and other types of enterprise
- Understand **the co-op development process and steps**, and how it varies for different types of co-ops, people and circumstances
- Understand **challenges** that arise during the development process and **how to address them**
- Understand **how to facilitate a group readiness assessment** for various types of co-ops

Part A: **Wednesday, January 7, 2026**

9:00 am Pacific

Assignment due: January 21 2026

Part B: **Wednesday, February 4, 2026**

9:00 am Pacific

Assignment(s) due: February 18 2026



**Facilitated by
Zoë Creighton +
Melanie Conn**



Course Descriptions and Dates

coopzone.org

Money Matters: Financial Systems, Reporting and Co-op Capital

Register for this course and you will soon:

- Understand **basic financial concepts** and reports
- Understand **financial forecasting/budgeting** and break-even analysis
- Have the ability to assist in implementing a **basic accounting and bookkeeping** system for a co-op in order to produce **regular financial reports (like income statements and balance sheets)**
- Understand members' rights and entitlements (**member equity**)
- Review co-op approaches to **surplus distribution** (including patronage rebates) appropriate to different situations, and their tax implications
- Be aware of **co-op sector sources of financial support** in your jurisdiction

Part A: **Wednesday, March 4, 2026**

11:00 am Central

Assignment due: March 18, 2026

Part B: **Wednesday, April 8, 2026**

11:00 am Central

Assignment(s) due: April 22, 2026

**Facilitated by
Russ Christianson**



Course Descriptions and Dates

coopzone.org

Co-operating on Climate: Co-ops and the Climate Emergency

In this course, participants will look at:

- The **impact of the climate emergency** for co-op businesses and industry
- Potential **key metrics and resources** for climate action and **risks of inaction**
- **Governance structures** that need to be in place **for meaningful, successful progress**
- **Tracking benefit impact outcomes**, that can link the strategic plan and drive tangible business outcomes
- Supporting leadership with **engaging member-owners and/or employees**

Part A: Thursday, September 3, 2026

9:00 am Pacific

Assignment due: September 17, 2026

Part B: Thursday, October 1, 2026

9:00 am Pacific

Assignment(s) due: October 15, 2026



Facilitate by
Jennifer Tan,
Ashley Grewal +
Lissette Lemus



Course Descriptions and Dates

coopzone.org

Financial Modeling and the Triple Bottom Line: Essential Tools for Co-op Enterprises

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- **Understand and develop a financial model for a co-operative using integrated spreadsheets,** showing projected income and expense, assets and liabilities, and cash flow
- **Understand the different levels of audits accountants offer and be able to recommend the appropriate level to co-ops** in various contexts
- Understand the **sustainability planning process** and using it in various stages of co-op development
- Understand and **explain sustainability goals (financial, social and environmental)** and how **to be accountable for monitoring the co-op's progress** on these goals.

Part A: **Thursday, November 5, 2026**

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Assignment due: November 19, 2026

Part B: **Thursday, December 3, 2026**

12:00 pm Eastern

Assignment(s) due: December 17, 2026

**Facilitated by
Russ Christianson**



Course Descriptions and Dates

coopzone.org

Walking the Talk: Implementing the Democratic Principles in Co-ops

This course dives deep into **decision-making models, and how and when to use them**. Explore the range of decision-making models and their challenges. Learn the steps involved in **managing decision-making options and how to support the implementation of decisions**.

Then you'll discover **how to understand and address conflict**. Learn where conflict arises, how to **build conflict competency**, and how **effective governance structures and tools** can help reduce negative impacts and encourage positive outcomes.

Enrolling in this course will help you **develop tools for managing and mitigating conflict**.

Part A: Thursday, January 7, 2027

9:00 am Pacific

Assignment due: January 21, 2027

Part B: Thursday, February 4, 2027

9:00 am Pacific

Assignment(s) due: February 18, 2027



Facilitated by
Zoë Creighton +
Melanie Conn



Course Descriptions and Dates

coopzone.org

Co-operative Development as Both a Practice and a Profession

This course helps participants develop essential hard skills — creating a development plan, market research, and business planning —while fostering strategic thinking and ethical leadership.

Participants will explore real-world challenges in co-op development, build networks of professional support, and understand market dynamics.

Core assignments include crafting a development plan and a business plan for a sample co-op, reinforcing practical applications of co-op development theory.

Part A: Thursday, March 4, 2027

11:00 am Central

Assignment due: March 18, 2027

Part B: Thursday, April 8, 2027

11:00 am Central

Assignment(s) due: April 22, 2027

**Facilitated by
Bill Granger**



Commonly Asked Questions

How do I register?

You can register through coopzone.org/services, or by emailing our Course Director, Russ Christianson (russ.c@xplornet.com) and Administrator, Adele Rosanova (info@coopzone.org).

How much does the program cost?

Courses cost \$750 each. We encourage people without the financial means to apply for bursaries to take our co-op developer training courses.

The CoopZone Training Program owes much of its success to the generous support of co-operative-minded organizations from coast to coast, who are able to contribute training bursaries to help with the tuition costs of some trainees. These supporters include:

- The Co-operators
- Canadian Worker Co-op Federation (CWCF)
- Red House Solutions
- Iler Campbell

What should students expect?

Students who want to work through the entire program to receive a certificate can expect a time commitment of one to two hours a week, depending on the student's level of participation working through:

- A rich collection of digital articles, tools and case studies,
- Two 60 - 90 minute participatory webinars for each course, and access to the recordings,
- Two 60 minute mentorship sessions for each course with your co-op developer mentor,
- One peer group assignment with other participants and two individual assignments for each course, typically one per month. Assignments are evaluated by the instructors on a pass/fail basis.



Commonly Asked Questions

Who should learn about developing co-op enterprises?

Everyone! Including, but not limited to:

- Economic development practitioners and organization
- People building the solidarity economy and/or social enterprises
- Equity-deserving groups focusing on shared goals and needs
- Steering group members exploring co-op models for the first time
- Newly incorporated co-ops who are building their foundation and future
- Employees and directors of provincial co-operative associations
- Employees and directors of sectoral co-op federations
- Employees, managers and directors of existing co-ops and credit unions looking for further professional development

What is CoopZone?

The CoopZone Developers' Network Co-operative a bilingual network that brings together, supports, and unifies the voice of professional co-operative developers and professional service providers (e.g., lawyers, accountants) across Canada. Our mission is to be a catalyst for co-operative developers and professional service providers to foster the social economy through the development of co-operatives.

What do people say about the program?

“CoopZone instructors are great, and the mentoring system gave me the chance to have hours of one-on-one time with an expert in the field.”

“I was extremely happy with the program overall, between the friends and peers, the training and the facilitators, and the mentoring, this program is second to none. I would highly suggest it to anyone interested or curious about the world of co-operative development.”



Instructor Profiles

coopzone.org

Christine Clarke

Christine Clarke is co-founder of Freedom Dreams Co-operative Education, a co-operative development and education hub that shares knowledge and resources about co-operatives and the solidarity economy from a Black, Indigenous and Person of Colour (BIPOC) perspective.

She believes that co-operative approaches can build the foundation for just and equitable workplaces and transformative community projects.

She is a graduate of CoopZone's Co-op Development training program.



Denyse Guy

Denyse Guy has been a leader, manager, governor, trainer, researcher and a mentor at the regional, provincial and international co-operative enterprise levels. You can still find her consulting, instructing, mentoring and facilitating across the co-operative world.

She was the founding Executive Director of several organizations including Ontario Co-operative Association and Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada.

Her contributions have been recognized with awards and accolades from many organizations, including the Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation and CMHC for outstanding contributions to Co-operative Housing to name a few.



Instructor Profiles

coopzone.org

Melanie Conn

Melanie Conn is a feminist and community activist who has been working in co-op and community economic development (CED) in Vancouver since the 1970s. As a proponent of co-ops as CED in practice, she has worn many hats over the years to implement co-op ideas as a founding member and co-op director in the housing, credit union, worker co-op and community co-op sectors.

For more than 30 years she has provided technical and development assistance for dozens of new co-ops, designed and delivered train-the-trainer programs and other curriculum related to co-operatives as the first Director of Simon Fraser University's Certificate Program for CED Professionals and as the President of the Women's Economic Council.

Melanie continues to support co-op development as a mentor and consultant through her participation in the BC Co-op Developer Community of Practice and with CoopZone.



Zoë Creighton

Zoë is a committed champion of the co-op model. Did you know she is one of the founding members of Kootenay Co-op Radio?

Zoë can be found working with the Upper Columbia Co-op Council, serving the Board of Nelson and District Credit Union, and consulting as a co-operative developer, supporting emerging and existing co-ops throughout BC. She is particularly interested in supporting boards in areas of effective governance, generative discussion and inclusive decision-making.

She is a past participant of CoopZone's Co-op Developer training program, and has been instructing and mentoring since 2018.



Instructor Profiles

coopzone.org

Russ Christianson

Russ has helped launch over three hundred co-operatives, with a seventy percent success rate (for which he gives the founders credit). He is the lead instructor for the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation's online Academy, and is an instructor, mentor, and course director, for CoopZone's Co-op Developer online training program.

For forty years, Russ has been working with communities, co-operative enterprises, unions, and environmental organizations to meet their strategic goals and develop good governance practices.

He created the Co-operative Sustainability Scorecard, has been volunteering with the Ontario Co-operative Association's Co-op Development Committee since the 1990s, and is the co-chair of the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation's Business Succession Committee, among many other things.



Jennifer Tan

Jennifer's passion is with the intersection between co-ops and climate action with over 19 years experience within the credit union system, currently as the Climate Action Manager at Coast Capital Federal Savings Credit Union, a Social Purpose Organization and B Corp.

She holds a Masters of Management in Co-operatives and Credit Unions from the Sobey School of Business at Saint Mary's University, and a Certificate of Sustainable Finance from the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management.

Jennifer's experience spans strategic planning, climate reporting and disclosures, technology development, operational efficiency, carbon footprint reduction, employee engagement and green building initiatives.



Instructor Profiles

coopzone.org

Ashley Grewal

Ashley is passionate about the economic, social and environmental sustainability of our communities as means to create resilient local and co-operative economies for future generations, including for her own two small children.

Ashley has worked extensively in the field of community investment and granting, CSR and environmental sustainability.

Ashley's work includes strategy, business planning, partnership and program development to support sustainable and resilient co-operatives, impact businesses and non-profits.

She serves on the board of two local non-profits, a national co-operative, and the advisory council of the Vancouver Local Immigration Partnership.



Lissette Lemus

Lissette brings expertise in social-responsibility, logistics, and relationship-building. She has extensive supply chain and vendor risk management experience in the financial services area. She is currently the Vendor Compliance Manager at Central 1 Credit Union. She has also been the Purchasing Manager at Vancity Credit Union, and held several positions in Supply Chain at the international conglomerate Unilever.

Lissette is a designated Supply Chain Management Professional (SCMP), and also recently completed her Master in Management, Co-operatives and Credit Unions (MMCCU) at Saint Mary's University.

Lissette also co-represents Canada on behalf of CICOPA Americas, a branch of ICA (International Cooperative Alliance) and recently delivered a presentation to 400+ people around the world highlighting the role of worker co-ops.



Instructor Profiles

coopzone.org

Bill Granger

In his extensive career as a business consultant, Bill Granger has served over 300 entrepreneurs by helping them launch, expand, stabilize or improve their businesses. Over those years, his clients have come from a wide range of industries, scale and backgrounds. They have utilized his services to develop their businesses into successful, financially-sustainable enterprises, some of which have gone on to become award-winning. In 2017, Bill was nominated by a client as a CBC Manitoba Future 40 for his contributions to the local community.

Bill attended the University of Winnipeg from 2001-2005, and is a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt (LSSBB) certified through Toppazzini & Lee Consulting, an approved training provider of The Council of Six Sigma Certification. Bill obtained a certificate in Effective Coaching from the Manitoba Tourism Education College in 2013, and in 2016, obtained his Advanced Co-op Developer Certificate from CoopZone

