



2025 Impact Report

**Building Resilient Communities Rooted
in Democratic Economies**

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A Letter from the Worker Board

At the heart of our mission is a belief in democratic ownership, community control, and economic systems that center people and the planet. Worker-owned cooperatives are not simply alternative business models, they are practical embodiments of economic democracy. In cooperatives, workers share ownership, have a say in decision-making, collectively determine wages and workplace conditions, and have family-sustaining incomes. This stands in stark contrast to business as usual, which concentrates wealth and power in the hands of a few.

In a world where political leaders increasingly embrace authoritarian tactics — undermining democratic norms, attacking labor rights, and fostering division — the solidarity economy offers a constructive, grassroots pathway for building power with and for workers and communities. As the New Economy Coalition describes it, the solidarity economy is: a movement rooted in justice, cooperation, sustainability, and shared prosperity, providing alternatives that prioritize human well-being over endless growth and accumulation of capital.

History teaches us that cooperative and solidarity economic practices aren't peripheral — they have been central to resisting oppression and building collective resilience. Black cooperative history, celebrated and documented across movements, shows how cooperatives have long been tools of economic self-determination and resistance in the face of racism, economic exclusion, and political repression. From mutual aid to freedom farms and credit unions, cooperative economics has helped communities fight back against systems that marginalize and exploit them.

Solidarity economies demonstrate that another world is possible — one where power is shared, dignity is upheld, and communities are resilient and self-determined. In the face of rising authoritarianism and fascist ideology, we write to share why the work we do together is more vital than ever.

In this report you'll see numerous examples of how our work supporting the incubation and growth of worker-owned cooperatives is more than just small business support. We are cultivating institutions that build grassroots democratic power and place control of economic life into the hands of workers. We are growing a network that is building community wealth, especially among historically marginalized communities.

We are grateful for your partnership in this long-term struggle for democratic economies and invite you to continue building with us.

In solidarity,
Beloved Community Incubator's Worker Board



Our Impact

Numbers Matter, but They Only Tell Part of the Story

In 2025, BCI continued to provide 100 hours of legal support and 500 hours of development support to local cooperatives and solidarity economy projects. Since 2020, we've provided more than 500 legal support hours and 2,500 hours of development support.



Over the past five years we have provided more than **500 hours of legal support and 1,500 development hours** to local cooperatives, solidarity economy projects, and democratic workplaces.

In 2025, we **distributed \$1.1 million in loans** through DC SELF

Supporting DC Street Vendors

Fighting for Fair Implementation

This year's implementation wins were hard fought, as vendors continue to navigate many institutional obstacles to access licenses. In 2023, the DC Government **decriminalized vending without a license, removed automatic criminal background check requirements, created an amnesty program for and reduced costly license and permit fees, which lowers barriers to entry across the board.**

In 2025 we saw **the implementation of DC's new microenterprise home kitchen permit**, an entirely new permit type and process that allows vendors and other microenterprises to legally prepare food in their home kitchens as a pathway to obtaining a vending license. With this permit, food vendors were finally able to complete the licensing process, bringing the total number of vendors from the campaign with licenses to 19 by the end of the year.



1000 hours
vendor license
accompaniment

20 vendors
fully
licensed

100 hours
executive
agency
advocacy



Supporting DC Street Vendors

Solidarity in Practice

In 2025, DC Street Vendors once again faced police harrassment and violence from local and federal police and immigration enforcement. In addition to our continued work helping vendors access licences, **BCI supported vendors who were afraid to work amid increased ICE activity by providing cash assistance and bulk food deliveries.**

This support has helped vendors have safety and stability without forcing people to risk harm to survive. By meeting material needs collectively, this work resists fear, isolation, and precarity - the conditions authoritarianism depends on. Solidarity-based support like this is a direct challenge to fascism, building care, dignity, and collective power in the face of repression.

**Over \$15,000
in cash
assistance
distributed
to vendors**



**\$5,000 in
bulk food
purchases
distributed to
vendors**

The BCI Network

An Ecosystem Built on Relationship

Through the BCI Network, we bring cooperatives and solidarity economy projects from different industries into shared space to ask questions, build trust, and find ways to work powerfully together. As part of cooperatives' commitment to the BCI Network, members are required to do a solidarity exchange - supporting other cooperatives.



Transverse Cooperative painted a mural for Swamp Rose Co-op's new nursery.



Throneless Tech designed a new logo and website for BCI.



Kalorama Market, a specialty grocery store, now carries Diestro chocolate.

The BCI Network

Reflection from Network Member

“BCI has provided invaluable support through technical assistance and coaching. They have been with us every step of the way in such a patient and caring way as we navigate the non-linear pathway of starting up/sustaining a cooperative business. Not only do we receive this support, but we can also give back to the network and strengthen the ties between co-ops by cooperating with amongst ourselves...We’ve loved working with other co-ops in the Network to make art for their businesses and deepening our camaraderie. The energy of the Network is reciprocal, circular, and intentional, which is precisely the antidote to the current times.”

Ellie Yanagisawa
Co-founder and worker-owner, Transverse Cooperative



2025 Incubation Cohort

The work of building a solidarity economy is rooted in listening

Our mini Incubation Cohort helped move cooperative ownership forward by giving people the tools they need to build strong, worker-owned businesses.

The program is designed for groups of three or more people who want to start a coop, as well as small business owners who want to sell their business to their workers and keep it rooted in the community.

Over three months, participants learned the basics of cooperative management, financial planning, business development, and financing, with one-on-one support from BCI staff.

Through the cohort, **BOL Bookstore** joined the BCI Network and moved to a new location, and **Sankofa Video and Books** — a long-standing pillar of Black literacy and culture since 1997 — began the process of becoming a worker-owner cooperative.



The DC Solidarity Economy Loan Fund

A National Partnership with Local Impacts



Through our partnership with Seed Commons, the **DC Solidarity Economy Loan Fund (DC SELF)** has loaned out more than \$4 million in non-extractive capital since 2022. **In 2025 we loaned \$1.1 million to local cooperatives.**

Since 2022 DC SELF has supported 10 projects in more than seven local industries – [helping cooperatives and solidarity economy projects](#) build wealth and family sustaining jobs in our region.

The DC Solidarity Economy Loan Fund

Local Investment Creates Responsible Tech

Throneless Tech, a worker-owned tech company, has worked on digital security and internet freedom projects around the globe for the past six years, including recently offering digital security audits and trainings for local organizations. Their two loans from DC SELF have helped them buy equipment, raise their wages, and build capacity to meet this moment.



The DC Solidarity Economy Loan Fund

Local Investment Grows BIPOC Wealth



Community Purchasing Alliance Cooperative (CPA) received a 2024 loan to expand racial equity purchasing. This year, CPA helped facilitate **17 million dollars in contracts for small, local BIPOC businesses** – creating and supporting dozens of family-sustaining jobs with spending that would normally go to large corporations.

DC SELF: Cooperative Solutions Across Our Region

Local investment builds local power



In 2025, **Swamp Rose Co-op** moved to a new location! This new location – along with a loan from DC SELF to buy a truck and other equipment – expanded the coop’s capacity and their team. Swamp Rose now has six full-time worker-owners and three on track to become owners in the next year.

DC SELF: Cooperative Solutions Across Our Region

Local investment Connects Community

The 51st's loan supported an increase in their staffing capacity and helped ensure that people in our region can continue to access accurate, independent news amidst our changing media climate. It also marks the first time nationally that a Seed Commons loan fund has invested in a worker-led media organization.





Beloved Community Incubator

Visit: belovedcommunityincubator.org

Beloved Community Incubator

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Financials available upon request.

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