

International Year of Cooperatives Fact Sheet

A cooperative is a member-owned and controlled business that operates for the mutual benefit of its members. Cooperatives operate across all sectors of the U.S. economy and include agriculture, food distribution and retailing, childcare, credit unions, purchasing, worker-owned, housing, healthcare, energy and telecommunications cooperatives. Cooperatives promote the fullest possible participation in the economic and social development of all people, including women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples.

Cooperatives are a major economic force in developed countries and a powerful business model in developing ones. Worldwide, over 800 million people are members of cooperatives. The economic activity of the largest 300 cooperatives in the world equals the 10th largest national economy.

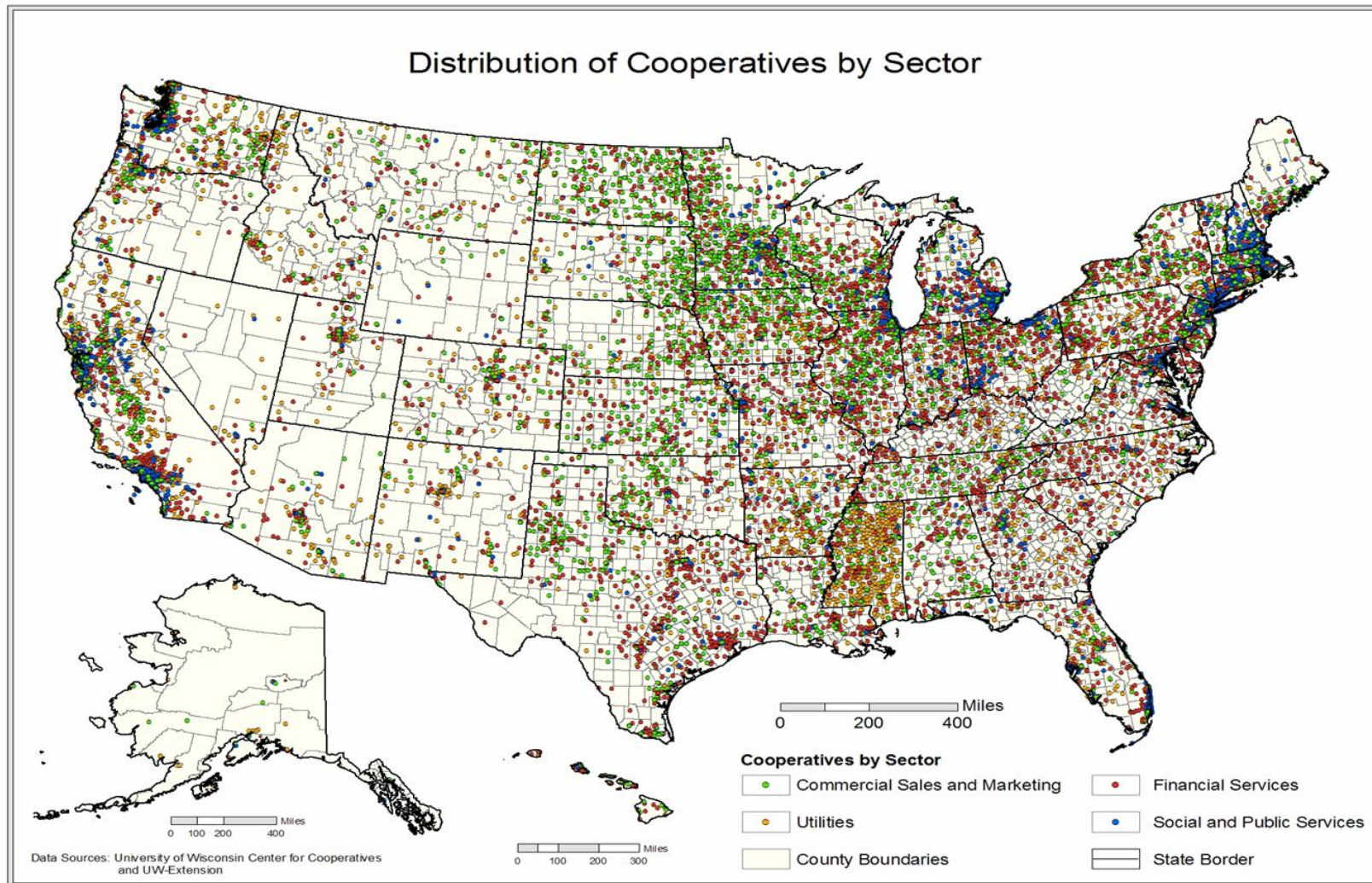
The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 64/136 proclaims the year 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC). The Resolution encourages all member States and all relevant stakeholders to take advantage of the IYC to promote cooperatives, to raise public awareness of the contribution of cooperatives to social and economic development and promote the formation and growth of cooperatives.

The theme of the International Year of Cooperatives is “Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World.”

Cooperatives in the United States...

- More than 29,000 cooperatives operate in every sector of the economy and in every congressional district; Americans hold over 350 million co-op memberships.
- U.S. cooperatives generate 2 million jobs and make a substantial contribution to the U.S. economy with annual sales of \$652 billion and possessing assets of \$3 trillion.
- The majority of our country's 2 million farmers are members of the nearly 3,000 farmer-owned cooperatives. They provide over 250 thousand jobs and annual wages of over \$8 billion.
- Over 7,500 credit unions provide financial services to 91 million U.S. consumers.
- More than 900 rural electric co-ops deliver electricity to more than 42 million people in 47 states. This makes up 42 percent of the nation's electric distribution lines and covers 75 percent of our country's land mass.
- Approximately 233 million people are served by insurance companies owned by or closely affiliated with co-ops.
- Food co-ops have been innovators in the areas of unit pricing, consumer protection, organic and bulk foods and nutritional labeling.
- More than 50,000 families in the U.S. use cooperative day care centers, giving co-ops a crucial role in the care of our children.
- About 1.2 million rural Americans in 31 states are served by the 260 telephone cooperatives.
- In the United States, more than 1.2 million families of all income levels live in homes owned and operated through cooperative associations.

This fact sheet was produced by the National Cooperative Business Association, which represents America's cooperatives and has a mission to develop, advance and protect cooperative enterprise. To learn more, visit www.ncba.coop.



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To receive a list of data sources or to learn more about the U.S. cooperative movement, visit www.ncba.coop or send e-mail to info@ncba.coop.