



[www.wagescooperatives.org](http://www.wagescooperatives.org)



Dear Friend,

At WAGES, we believe we are in the midst of a renaissance of social movements that address income inequality and create real opportunities for advancement. We have witnessed a deep swell of interest in the worker co-op model as people all over the country increasingly see its value as a vehicle for economic stability, fairness, democratic practices, and civic participation.

We know that our current economy is not meeting the needs of anyone—least of all, the low-wage workers who are the backbone of our society. We are inspired and humbled that many people are choosing worker co-ops as a way to lead a fuller life.

Over the last 19 years, WAGES has made a nearly unparalleled contribution to the cooperative development movement in the U.S., incubating and now sustaining 5 of the estimated 40 immigrant-led worker co-ops in this country. Yet, in many ways, WAGES is still a very young organization that is actively growing and changing.

While honoring our nearly two-decade legacy, we frequently revisit our past assumptions, analyze our historical outcomes, and come away with new insights and fresh ideas. We know that cooperative development is a fundamentally human project, fraught with paradoxes, complications, and challenges. At its core, cooperative development runs against the grain of entrenched systems of power, and faces an uphill battle of turning societal norms on their head.

Historically, WAGES has been seen as a job creation program. However, our impact cannot be measured by job creation alone. Our model hinges on worker-owner personal transformation, that is long-term and cross-generational. Thus, WAGES' model centers on job *quality*, rather than job creation. We believe this is at the heart of our vision for a new economy.

I strongly believe that in collaboration with others, we can build a new foothold in the US economy like what has already been successfully demonstrated in Italy, Spain and other countries in Latin America. The

US has great growth potential, as the co-op movement worldwide is proven as a viable economic model. Our vision is that in partnership with others, WAGES can spark profound change through worker co-ops by rooting wealth in underserved communities, promoting democratic processes, and opening new opportunities for leadership development.

We will continue to share our new developments as part of our commitment to build the field of worker co-ops rooted in low-income communities. To learn more, see our [2013 Year in Review](#) and visit our [blog](#) and [social media](#). We look forward to learning, along with the rest of you, to develop an economic renaissance fueled by the development of worker co-ops.

Warm regards,



Meche Sansores  
Executive Director



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