



## Cooperation Jackson Basic Membership Form (Please Print - Neatly)

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Landline: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred contact #: (Cell, Land, Work) \_\_\_\_\_

Best Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Race/Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization(s) to which you belong: \_\_\_\_\_

### Cooperation Jackson's Mission and Purpose

The broad mission of Cooperation Jackson is to advance the development of economic democracy in Jackson, Mississippi by building a solidarity economy anchored by a network of cooperatives and other types of worker-owned and democratically self-managed enterprises.

Economic democracy provides economic empowerment for all workers, distributors, suppliers, consumers, communities and the general public by promoting universal access to common resources, democratizing the ownership of the means of production, and democratizing all the essential processes of production and distribution through worker self-management and sustainable consumption.

Solidarity economy includes a wide array of economic practices and initiatives that share common values – cooperation and sharing, social responsibility, sustainability, equity and justice. Instead of enforcing a culture of cutthroat competition, it builds cultures and communities of cooperation.

## Our Purpose is to create:

1. A network of interconnected and interlinked cooperatives and worker owned enterprises in Jackson, Mississippi that will expand economic opportunity, promote sustainability and build community wealth by creating jobs with dignity, stability, living wages and quality benefits.
2. A foundation for the revitalization of the working class communities of Jackson, Mississippi based on stable employment, wealth equity and sustainable means of production and distribution.
3. A institutional vehicle to promote broad public understanding of economic democracy, the foundations of solidarity economics and the principles of cooperatives and how cooperative and worker owned and self-managed enterprises work to benefit workers, their families and their communities.
4. A institutional vehicle to educate and train working people in Jackson, Mississippi to successfully start, finance, own, democratically operate and self-manage a sustainable cooperative enterprise.
5. A model that will encourage and enable workers in other cities and municipalities in Mississippi, the South and throughout the United States to implement their own initiatives to promote economic democracy, solidarity economics and cooperative development.

## Principles:

1. **Voluntary and Open Membership:** Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all who agree with the cooperative principles who are able to use its services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.
2. **Democratic Member Control:** The cooperative system is based upon the equality of member-workers or cooperators. Aside from limited and special circumstances all workers must be members. The cooperative is democratically controlled on the basis of one member, one vote; its governing structures are democratically controlled and are also responsible to the general assembly or other elected body.
3. **Sovereignty of Labor:** Labor is the essential transformative fact of society. The cooperatives renounce wage labor, give full power to the owner-workers to control the co-ops, give primacy to workers in distribution of surpluses, and work to extend the cooperative choice to all members of society.
4. **Autonomy and Independence:** Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it is done so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintains the cooperative's autonomy.
5. **Instrumental and Subordinated Character of Capital:** Capital is basically accumulated labor and a necessary factor in business development and savings. The co-ops pay a just but limited return on capital saved or invested, a return that is not directly tied to the losses or surpluses of the co-ops. Their need for capital shall not impede the principle of open admission, but co-op members must make a substantial, affordable, and equal financial investment in the cooperative. At present, this membership contribution is equal to a year's salary of the lowest-paid member.
6. **Members' Economic Participation:** Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. This benefits members based on the proportion of contributed labor or hours worked or the level of business they conduct with the cooperative rather than on the capital invested.

7. **Self-Management:** Cooperation involves both collective effort and individual responsibility. Cooperation “is the development of the individual not against others but with others.” Democratic control means participation in management and the ongoing development of the skills needed for self-management. There must be clear information available on the co-op’s operations, systematic training of owner-workers, internal promotion for management positions, and consultations and negotiations with all cooperators in organizational decisions that affect them.
8. **Pay Solidarity:** The co-ops will practice both internal and external pay solidarity. Internally, the total pay differential between the lowest and the highest paid member shall not exceed a factor of one to six.
9. **Internal Cooperation – Cooperation within the Federation of Cooperative Jackson:** Internal cooperation within Cooperation Jackson exists on three levels: among individual co-ops organized into groups; among co-op groups; and between *Cooperation Jackson* system and other movements.
10. **External Cooperation - Cooperation among Cooperatives:** Co-ops are not isolated entities. Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.
11. **Education, Training and Information:** Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. Members also inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives.
12. **Social Transformation:** Cooperation in the *Cooperation Jackson* system is an instrument for social transformation. As Jose Maria Arizmendiarieta, a founder of the Mondragón system wrote “Cooperation is the authentic integration of people in the economic and social process that shapes the new social order; the cooperators must make the objective extend to all those that hunger and thirst for justice in the working world.” The cooperatives of *Cooperation Jackson* will reinvest the major portion of their surpluses in Jackson and Kush District (the contiguously Afrikan counties of western Mississippi). Following the Mondragón model, a significant portion our surplus will go toward new job development, to community development (through the use of social funds), to a social security system based on mutual solidarity and responsibility, to cooperation with other institutions advancing the cause of workers in Mississippi, and to collaborative efforts to developing a transformative culture in Mississippi.
13. **Universal Nature:** *Cooperation Jackson* proclaims its solidarity with all who labor for economic democracy, peace, justice, human dignity, and development throughout the world, particularly with the peoples of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America.

### **Basic Membership Requirements**

Agreement and practical unity with the Mission, Principles and Program of *Cooperation Jackson*.

Payment of Joining Dues/Ownership Share - \$50.00 which will equal one vote. A payment plan of no less than \$10.00 monthly can be arranged with payments due within six months. No voter share until dues are paid in full.

Annual Payment of Membership Dues/Ownership Shares in *Cooperation Jackson* and Individual Worker Cooperatives will be decided within each cooperative.

Commitment to work in and/or make significant contributions to one or more of the Federations cooperatives.

Residence in the City of Jackson or the State of Mississippi.



I have read, discussed, and understand the Mission, Purpose, and Principles of *Cooperation Jackson*.

I agree to work cooperatively in unity within the Mission, Purpose, and Principles of *Cooperation Jackson*.

I understand the rights, obligations and requirements of being a member of *Cooperation Jackson*.

**Signatures:**

Prospective Member:

Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness:

Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your completed application, along with your money order or check to Cooperation Jackson at P.O. Box 1932, Jackson, MS 39215. Membership dues paid in cash must be given to a Cooperation Jackson core member.