

2025 Montana Cooperative Academy

May 12–14, 2025 | Great Falls, MT

Empowering Co-op Leaders. Building Stronger Communities.

Why Attend?

Whether you're brand new to cooperative work or a seasoned board member looking to recharge, the Montana Cooperative Academy offers a hands-on, interactive experience to explore the **power of cooperatives**, strengthen your **governance know-how**, and build **cross-sector connections** that support thriving Montana communities.

Join cooperative champions from across the state in an energizing, three-day training designed for **frontline staff, general managers, board members and those interested in understanding or building cooperative solutions**—rooted in cooperative principles and focused on real-world application.

AGENDA AT A GLANCE

MONDAY, MAY 12

Welcome, Orientation & Cooperative Foundations

12:00 PM | Check-In Opens

Bring your lunch and settle in. Doors open for informal networking and mingling with the instructors and staff.

1:00 PM | Welcome & Ice-Breakers – *Led by Gerry Singleton- CEO of Montana's Credit Unions*

- Get to know fellow co-op leaders
- Share your co-op's origin story (30–60 sec)
- Engage in fun team-building across sectors

2:00 PM | Co-op Structures & Governance – *Led by Tracy McIntyre – Executive Director of Montana Cooperative Development Center and Council of Cooperatives.*

- Explore Montana's co-op ecosystem
- Understand the roles of boards vs. management

- Dive into how different types of co-ops function

2:30 PM | Co-op Spotlights & Cross-Sector Connections – *Led by Davey Madison and Nicole Borner with the Montana Cooperative Development Center*

- Real success stories from emerging co-ops
- Testimonials on how co-ops are changing lives
- Creative cross-sector collaboration ideas

3:30 PM | *The Heart of Cooperatives* – *Led by Gerry Singleton*

- Team-based problem-solving challenge
- Learn the true impact of Principle 6: Cooperation Among Cooperatives

6:00 PM | Networking Reception at the *Montana Electric Cooperative's Association*
Mix and mingle with GMs, CEOs, and board members from Montana's regional co-ops.

TUESDAY, MAY 13

Deep Dive into Cooperative Models, Challenges & Opportunities

8:00 AM | Coffee & Community
Settle in, connect with others, and grab a cup!

8:15 AM | Day 1 Recap – *Facilitated by Tracy McIntyre and Gerry Singleton*

8:30 AM | Co-op Frameworks: Principles, Policies & Possibilities – *Led by Adam Schwartz-Founder of the Cooperative Way*

- The 7 Cooperative Principles & values
- Interactive sessions on co-op challenges & benefits
- Montana co-op history & legal frameworks
- Governance & leadership models

12:00 PM | Cooperative Finance Basics – *Led by John DeGroot - Chief Financial Officer of Clearwater Credit Union.*

- Introducing the co-op capital, funding, and financial sustainability

12:30 PM | Lunch + Connection Building

1:00 PM | *The Community Challenge Case Study* – *Led by Gerry Singleton and Quincie Jones – Executive Director of Career and Technical Education at Great Falls College, MSU*

- Collaborate across sectors to solve a real-world issue
- Learn how to activate co-ops to meet community needs
- Discover how succession, youth engagement, and sustainability intersect

7:00 PM | Fireside Chat Reception – *Anne's Tap House*

7:30 PM | Cooperative Panel: Community Impact in Action – *Moderated by Adam Schwartz*

- Lively discussion + open Q&A with cooperative leaders across sectors
- Learn how broadband, energy, credit unions, ag, and other sectors, including the development side of cooperatives all intersect

Featured Panelists:

- Bridger Mahlum – *Broadband MT*
- Gary Wiens – *Montana Electric Cooperative's Association*
- Gerry Singleton – *Montana Credit Unions*
- Tracy McIntyre – *MCDC / MCOC*
- Brad Gjermo – *Rocky Mountain Supply (Ag Sector)*

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14

Bringing It All Together: Your Co-op Plan for Action

8:00 AM | Coffee & Recap of Days 1 & 2

8:30 AM | *Cross-Sector Team Presentations – Led by Gerry Singleton*

- Showcase your team's community solution
- Interactive discussion and Q&A

11:00 AM | Making a Co-op Action Plan – *Led by Quincie Jones*

- Reflect on key takeaways
- Share your commitment to action
- Build a plan to bring new ideas back to your co-op

11:45 AM | Feedback & Final Thoughts

- Event evaluations and closing remarks

12:00 PM | Travel Home

Head home inspired, informed, and ready to lead.

