

Facilitating a caucus or working group at NASCO Institute

Purpose:

- networking
- sharing ideas and experience
- strategies for action
- crafting proposals for the AGM (annual general meeting)
- staying in contact and organizing throughout the year

The caucuses/working groups and the proposals that originate from them have helped determine short and long-term goals for NASCO. They are about creating safe spaces, in NASCO and the cooperative movement, for voicing concerns and ideas, or simply getting together and talking. If you are facilitating a caucus, make sure to plan ahead, have some questions and topics ready.

Some Ideas for Discussion

- You can start with a go-around, so that everybody has an opportunity to introduce themselves and say why they're here!
- What can you talk about? The facilitator can suggest some topics, or they can be suggested by the group, during the go-around or by doing a pop-corn of topics, for example. (See some suggestions at the end.)
- The topics: can be discussed by the whole group or smaller groups. The small groups can also switch topic after some time.
- The goal of the discussions are to: strategize, draft proposals, collect people's stories and ideas, identify issues among the community, and possible solutions. Have someone take notes, make drawings, diagrams...
- Don't forget the email list!
Collect people's contact information: participant's names, what cooperative/organization they are from, email, (phone number). Turn this list in to the registration desk after the caucus and we will set up a mailing list within the next few weeks.
- Choosing a chair, or representative: an essential step to ensure the group's ideas will stay alive. Look for someone:
 - who you think could represent the caucus's own diversity.
 - who will keep contact with the participants after Institute.
 - Who will spark new discussions and keep the caucus active.
- The representative you choose will communicate the main points of the discussion to the AGM and to Diversity congress (for identity caucuses). (See document to learn about the caucus report process at AGM.)

The chair of an identity caucus chair may have an opportunity to be appointed by the

Diversity Congress to sit on the NASCO Board for a year. This year, The PoCC - People of Colour Caucus - chair, the ICCoPO - Inter-Cooperative Committee on Privilege and Oppression - chair, and the Diversity Congress chair will receive one-year appointments to the Board.

Some things you could talk about:

- Coop stories: What are you working on in your coops? What are the coopers' projects and ideas?
- After Institute: Do you have a project in mind, and what could NASCO do to support you? (It could be a web site, a zine, an event, a workshop, in your coop or at large)
- Identify issues and good things in the coop movement, and at NASCO institute. At the AGM, we will be setting goals and priorities for the next year with representatives from dozens of coops. Be sure your point of view is included.