



# THE WORKER COOPERATIVE NATIONAL CONVERSIONS COLLABORATIVE

Currently, two trends signal an unparalleled opportunity for democratizing ownership of American business. First, the wave of baby boomer retirements means that billions of dollars of wealth in business ownership will be transferred in the next few years. Second, the growth of the sustainable business movement indicates a desire for more socially responsible business structures and practices. In order to effectively seize this opportunity we need a strategic, partnered approach.

To this end, the Democracy at Work Institute will convene a “Conversions Collaborative” of trusted and credible partners in the worker cooperative, sustainable business, ESOP, and impact investing communities to capture both the scalability of ESOPs and the deep impact of worker cooperatives. We believe this approach is the most effective means for working toward scale, because it leverages the reach and expertise of all of our organizations to address key challenges that can only be solved collaboratively. Working together, we can initiate the push necessary to bring democratic employee ownership to scale. The project will have the following six steps.

Step	Deliverables	Timeline
<b>1. Develop the models and tools</b> for efficient, successful ownership transitions to democratic employee ownership	(1) a set of technical resources that guides professionals through the conversion models and (2) case studies of financing conversions	June 2015 – Sept 2015
<b>2. Bring together key service providers</b> to provide training on the new models and tools, and to establish a national network of support for the ownership transitions	(1) a network of cooperative conversion professionals through an online platform and (2) an in-person, 3-day educational and networking conference with the network	Sept 2015 – Oct 2015
<b>3. Build a much larger pipeline</b> for deals that focuses on values-driven businesses and employers of low-wage workers	Identify and have initial conversations with 400 potential conversion candidates, and five investors interested exiting through employee ownership	Aug 2015 – April 2016
<b>4. Support strategic deals</b> to make sure that they have the resources and expertise necessary to be successful	Provide technical assistance support and find necessary financing for 10 high-potential worker cooperative conversions	Dec 2015 – Dec 2016
<b>5. Measure and communicate the impact</b> of these transitions in a coordinated strategy to raise the profile of business transitions to employee ownership, and	(1) a set of impact metrics and collection methods/tools for conversions, and (2) press releases, hi-res photos, case studies, and media outreach for each strategic deal	May 2016 – Dec 2016
<b>6. Engage a broader group of stakeholders,</b> including economic developers, policy makers, and other thought leaders to make democratic employee ownership transitions a standard practice for building community wealth	Offer a set of stakeholder-specific resources to at least five strategic partners including a 4-page introductory document for their audience, PowerPoint for their audience, offer to speak to their audience, and other requested materials	May 2016 – Dec 2016

We are currently reaching out to potential partners to refine the workplan and determine roles. If your organization or an organization you know of would be interested in participating, please reach out to us at [conversions@institute.usworker.coop](mailto:conversions@institute.usworker.coop).