



## Missouri Institute of Cooperatives

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Dear Agricultural Educator:

**Curriculum developed for Missouri teachers provides resources to foster learning about the cooperative form of business.** The **Cooperative Essentials Unit**, developed for MIC by Vivayic in close cooperation with DESE, is part of the Ag Management, Economics & Sales curriculum.

The lessons are designed to complement MIC's *Public Speaking* and *Create Your Own Cooperative* contests. Our goal is to increase students' knowledge and also make it easier for your students to participate in the contests. **Resources for teachers and students** are available at mic.coop. In addition, MIC members are ready to participate and support the learning activities.

### Create Your Own Cooperative Contest

The Contest provides hands-on leadership, entrepreneurial experiences and insight into business development and offers students valuable tools to become effective business leaders. From the district winners of the Create Your Own Cooperative Contest, first and second place state winners will be selected. A member of the first and second place teams receives an expense paid trip to a selected Cooperative Youth Leadership Institute. **MIC also awards the state winners and top class or chapter in each district \$500.**

### Public Speaking Contest

The purpose of the FFA Public Speaking Contest is to foster a greater understanding of the cooperative form of business and to provide students an opportunity to enhance their skills in speaking about agriculture and the cooperatives that serve rural Missouri.

The theme for the 2019-2020 Contest is **"What is the Future Role of Cooperatives in My Community?"**

- Local, area and district contests will be held simultaneously with other speaking contests. The state contest for the MIC sponsored FFA Public Speaking Contest will be held in conjunction with the MIC annual meeting in early 2020. The state winner speaks at the MIC Annual Banquet on the evening of the state speaking contest.
- Cash awards are given to the top three contestants at the state level and their chapters. The first and second place state contestants also receive an expense paid trip to a selected Cooperative Youth Leadership Institute.
- If you have a student interested in the contest please contact your district supervisor.

For more information or questions about the curriculum or the contests, please contact Kristi Livingston at 573-882-0140 or [LivingstonK@missouri.edu](mailto:LivingstonK@missouri.edu).

Thank you for giving so generously of your time to support students' opportunity to learn about cooperatives.

Sincerely,

Matt Staley  
Chair, Cooperative Education Committee

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# Create Your Own Cooperative Contest

## Objectives

Provide students with hands-on experience to learn the benefits and challenges of operating a cooperative business.

Encourage students to develop business and leadership skills.

## Contest Rules & Awards

Any Missouri FFA chapter or class can enter the "Create Your Own Cooperative" contest by submitting a completed award application form by January 13.

The contest entry can be for a class project, club chapter activity or other appropriate school activity carried out by the students under the guidance of an instructor.

The contest awards will be presented at the winner's annual school awards ceremony. Participants will compete with other schools in their district.

The Missouri Institute of Cooperatives will award the top class or chapter in each district **\$500**.

The Missouri Institute of Cooperatives will select first and second place state winning teams from the district winners. A member of the first place and the second place teams will receive an expense paid trip to a selected Cooperative Youth Leadership Institute. The state winner will be invited to MIC's annual meeting in the first quarter of the calendar year.

The winning entry for the state contest will be made available on request for review by future contestants.

## How to Begin

**1. Refer to the "Cooperatives in AgriBusiness" section of the Cooperative Essentials Unit, in the Ag Management, Economics and Sales Curriculum. Visit [mic.coop/curriculumresources](http://mic.coop/curriculumresources) for helpful information on the cooperative form of business. "Coops 101 - An Introduction to Cooperatives" is also available from USDA: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/cir55.pdf>. If you have questions, contact Kristi Livingston at [LivingstonK@missouri.edu](mailto:LivingstonK@missouri.edu).**

### **Complete the contest entry form.**

*Students may not be familiar with the concepts behind a cooperative business. It will be important for them to understand the basic principles prior to organizing a cooperative.*

**2. Organize a tour of a local cooperative or ask a local cooperative member to speak to the class about the basics of cooperative organizations. Find out why**

people in the community have formed cooperatives rather than another form of business. A list of MIC member cooperatives is available at [mic.coop/mocoops](http://mic.coop/mocoops).

**3. Have students determine a common need.** *The fundamental reason for establishing a cooperative is to enable a group of people to accomplish a goal or meet a shared need by working together. What are their goals? What problems are critical? How would cooperative business principles help to solve problems and reach a common goal? How does this differ from other business structures?*

**4. Set up a steering committee.** *If students indicate a strong interest in working together to solve a problem, they are ready to explore the formation of a cooperative by electing a temporary steering committee. The total class or chapter will be too large to plan, shape and draft a proposal for organizing a cooperative to achieve specific goals.*

**5. Obtain support and approval of the entire class.** *A cooperative can succeed only when the majority understand and share a commitment to make it work. The potential members need to discuss the specific goals, suggest changes, and finally approve their plan.*

**6. Form a new committee to draft the bylaws.** *A cooperative is a legal corporation organized according to Missouri laws. The bylaws explain what the cooperative can do and how it shall be organized and function as a business.*

**7. Have class members conduct an organizational meeting.** *At this time class members can decide if they want to adopt the bylaws. If they do, the process of electing a board of directors and signing up members can begin. When the board of directors has been elected, it is time to employ a manager and to approve policies to guide the cooperative's activities.*

**8. The cooperative carries out its functions.** *The manager carries out the day-to-day operation of business and ensures that the policies adopted by the board are followed. The manager hires the staff to conduct the business operation. The board monitors the operation and initiates any changes in the policies necessary to strengthen the cooperative.*

**9. Keep members informed and actively involved in the operation of the cooperative.** *The board is the direct contact between the members and the cooperative business. It is essential that members understand and approve the actions of the board and management. Two-way communication is of utmost importance and should be encouraged through meetings — annual or special, newsletters, advertisements, etc.*

For more information on the Create Your Own Cooperative Contest, please email Kristi Livingston at [LivingstonK@missouri.edu](mailto:LivingstonK@missouri.edu).

There are several short videos that provide an excellent overview of cooperatives. These videos can be found at [mic.coop/coopvideos](http://mic.coop/coopvideos).