25 Enterprises that build RESILIENCE
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The Transition US REconomy Project seeks to explore these three questions and develop strategies to bring these economic ideals to life.

In this report, we highlight twenty-five examples of enterprises that build community wealth and resilience, are committed to appropriate localization and resource use, and serve a mission greater than profit (see page 17 for more information on these criteria). This list is by no means comprehensive, but provides an introduction to ideas, structures and models you might want to explore in transforming your local economy or creating your own resilience-building enterprise.

Some of these projects are connected to local Transition Initiatives, and many are not. Most of the enterprises are worker-owned or consumer cooperatives, which facilitate economic democracy. All of them harness innovation and collective creativity to provide carefully-designed responses to the mainstream economy’s systemic failures.

About the REconomy Project:

Transition US is part of a group of five national Transition hubs (along with Portugal, Germany, Brazil, and Mexico) who are receiving mentoring and support from Transition Network to bring the award-winning REconomy Project to the US. Launched in Transition Town Totnes, UK, REconomy is intended to bring forth a new economic vision and practices that align with Transition values.

Learn more about REconomy on the Transition US REconomy page or the Transition Network REconomy Project websites.

Many thanks to –

- Our expert advisors: Fiona Ward of Transition Network, Kevin Bayuk of Lift Economy, and Noel Ortega of Democracy Collaborative;
- Everyone who submitted nominations for resilience-building enterprises; and
- All the incredible entrepreneurs and activists on the frontlines of economic transformation in the U.S.!
1. **Bay Bucks**  
San Francisco Bay Area, CA

Bay Bucks, which operates a business-to-business barter exchange program in California’s greater San Francisco Bay Area with more than 250 participating local businesses. The model serves as a foundation for building a resilient regional economy by first enrolling the participation and support of local businesses before launching as an alternative consumer currency.

Bay Bucks also provides public education on our monetary system, including this teleseminar with Transition US, and co-hosted the first Living the New Economy Convergence—Oakland in 2014. Bay Bucks operates as a worker-owner cooperative.

![Image of people at a Bay Bucks event](www.baybucks.com/

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2. **CERO Cooperative**  
Boston, MA

CERO, which stands for Cooperative Energy, Recycling & Organics (and also means “zero” in Spanish, referring to zero waste) is a multi-racial, worker-owned cooperative in Boston that collects organic waste from local grocery, cafeteria, and restaurant customers, reducing trash sent to landfill and incinerators by 50% or more. Instead of the organic waste producing methane gas in a landfill, CERO delivers the organic waste to composting facilities, where it is turned into compost for community use.

With support from Boston Impact Initiative, the Cooperative Fund of New England, Cutting Edge Capital, and more than 80 community investors, CERO’s working-class owners were able to raise more than $400,000 in start-up capital through grants, a crowdfunding campaign, and a Direct Public Offering (DPO).

![Image of CERO worker-owners](http://www.cero.coop/)

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CERO worker-owners Tom Hall and Steven Evans on their route. Photo by Josefin Luna, courtesy of CERO Cooperative Inc.
3. **Community Pharmacy**

Madison, WI

Community Pharmacy is a worker-owned cooperative pharmacy in Madison, Wisconsin that offers alternative, herbal, and natural healthcare products in addition to a full-service conventional pharmacy.

Community Pharmacy opened more than forty years ago as a volunteer-staffed project of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Student Association, and has maintained a thriving downtown business through four decades, despite pressure from nearby competing chain pharmacies.

4. **Cooperation Jackson**

Jackson, MS

Cooperation Jackson is a multi-layered plan to support economic democracy in Jackson, Mississippi, and the surrounding area.

In the state with the highest percentage of Black residents as well as the nation’s highest poverty rates, Cooperation Jackson is developing a network of cooperatives and other worker-owned, democratically managed enterprises including child care, urban farming, arts and culture, a café, and recycling.

In addition, Cooperation Jackson’s Sustainable Communities Initiative will start an eco-village housing cooperative, based on a community land trust developed and operated by Cooperation Jackson’s Community Development Corporation.
Co-op Power is a regional network of consumer-owned sustainable energy cooperatives in New York and New England, dedicated to building a multi-class, multi-racial movement for a sustainable and just energy future. Co-op members receive discounts on energy products like biodiesel, energy efficiency upgrades, and solar hot water, solar electric, and wind energy systems.

In addition, member equity and loans drive investment in local clean energy enterprises including Energía, an energy efficiency business in Holyoke, Massachusetts; Northeast Biodiesel, a recycled vegetable oil biodiesel processing plant in Greenfield, Massachusetts; a Community Solar project in Brattleboro, Vermont; five solar installation businesses; and more.

DIG Cooperative, Inc. is a general contracting firm and worker-owned cooperative that specializes in ecological design and installation, including water conservation audits and retrofits, rainwater catchment systems, storm water management, erosion control, native plants and drought-tolerant landscaping, urban farming and gardening systems, watershed stewardship and restoration, and low-impact development.

Some of DIG’s accomplishments include exceeding LEED Platinum standards for home water and energy use, installing Berkeley’s first permitted greywater system and California’s first constructed wetland for greywater treatment, and providing green job training in partnership with the City of Oakland Redevelopment Agency.
D-TOWN FARM

D-Town Farm is a model urban farm in Northwestern Detroit. A project of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, a group of individuals and organizations dedicated to building food security and advocating for food justice for Detroit’s majority African-American community, D-Town Farm grows organic vegetables which it sells on-site and at urban growers markets throughout Detroit.

After negotiating with the City of Detroit for two years, D-Town farm secured a 10-year lease on its 7-acre plot, in the midst of public River Rouge Park, for just $1 annually. Run by a combination of paid staff and volunteers, D-Town Farm includes organic vegetable plots, bee hives, a hoop house for year round food production, and a composting operation.

THE GROWHAUS

The GrowHaus is a nonprofit indoor farm in Denver’s Elyria-Swansea neighborhood dedicated to creating a community-driven, neighborhood-based food system by serving as a hub for food distribution, production, education, and job creation.

The GrowHaus produces food year-round in an historic 20,000-square-foot greenhouse using aquaponics, hydroponics, and permaculture systems. Produce is distributed to the community through Food Boxes (similar to a CSA) and an on-site market, Mercado de al Lado, which utilizes a tiered food pricing system to ensure accessibility to all community members. In addition, the GrowHaus offers public workshops, Micro Farmer training, and a free food pantry, and partners with Denver Food Rescue and the Birdseed Collective to operate FORAGES, a collaborative that redistributes grocery store food that would otherwise go to waste to community members.

http://dtownfarm.blogspot.com/

http://www.thegrowhaus.org/
Growing Power is a non-profit organization and land trust operating urban farms in Chicago, Illinois; Madison, Wisconsin; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin (its headquarters). Its farms provide job training and technical assistance in urban agriculture and grow, sell, and distribute a variety of produce, fish, meat, worm castings, and compost.

Launched in 1993 to provide Milwaukee teenagers with jobs and provide equal access to healthy, high-quality, safe and affordable food for people in all communities, Growing Power has become a national leader in sustainable urban agriculture and education, hosting workshops on topics from closed-loop aquaponics and vermiculture to anti-racism at its farms and Regional Outreach Training Centers across the country. A five-story model vertical farm is currently being developed for the Milwaukee site.

J&P Dry Cleaners is an inspiring example of what’s possible when a community comes together to help an existing enterprise transform to better serve local needs. With support from Jamaica Plain New Economy Transition (JPNET), a Transition Initiative in Boston’s Jamaica Plain Neighborhood that received a grant to help convert a traditional dry cleaning service (which commonly use the toxic chemical perchloroethylene) into a nontoxic wet cleaner, JP Cleaners was able to raise $18,000 through a crowdfunding campaign to help cover the costs of purchasing the green cleaning equipment.

JPNET sees this as a win-win for their efforts to build a cancer-free economy in their Boston neighborhood while supporting existing local businesses that provide livelihoods to many of the Jamaica Plain neighborhood’s residents.
Kaua‘i Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC) is a consumer-owned, non-profit electric cooperative on the Hawaiian island of Kaua‘i. To achieve its goal of producing 50% of the island’s power from local renewable resources by 2023, KIUC has built two of its own solar farms and is considering a dozen other hydropower and solar projects.

In 2015, KIUC estimates that half of Kaua‘i’s daytime energy needs will be supplied by solar PV, both residential and utility-scale, which is the highest percentage of solar PV on an electrical grid of any utility in the US!

Local Investing Opportunities Network (LION)

A LION is a loosely organized network of citizens who support local businesses and invest their money locally. LIONS create opportunities for local businesses and investors to network and develop relationships. Businesses submit summaries of their business opportunities to LION, which are then distributed to its members. Interested members then follow up personally with the submitter. If a relationship and mutual interest develops, an investment may be made.

Building on prior efforts, the first LION was founded in 2008 as a project of Local 20/20, a Transition Initiative in Port Townsend, Washington. Through 2012, its 70+ members invested over $3 million in loans and equity in 37 small businesses and nonprofits, and it continues to be active. Recipients of investment range from single-employee operations to businesses employing 25 or more people, in sectors such as small manufacturing, food, retail, services, and nonprofits.

Since 2008, the LION model has spread to other communities across the US. www.local-investing.com has detailed instructions for starting one in your community.
Lopez Community Land Trust
Lopez Island, WA

Lopez Community Land Trust (LCLT) is not only addressing the affordable housing shortage on Lopez Island, Washington, but also serving as a model for ecological land stewardship. The non-profit trust owns the land, and homeowners purchase shares in the housing cooperative through a combination of sweat equity (building their own homes) and cash. To ensure housing remains affordable for future buyers, cooperative members cannot sell their shares above a specified cap.

LCT is unique among community land trusts because of its commitment to sustainable agriculture and green building, including use of straw bale construction, rainwater catchment, solar hot water, and more.

Learn more about LCLT’s approach in this case study by the Capital Institute or in the LCLT’s manual: Land, Water, Energy, Resource Use: A Systems Approach: Understanding Our Fourth Affordable Housing Development.

New Leaf Initiative
State College, PA

New Leaf Initiative is a non-profit co-working space and community innovation hub in State College, PA, that supports social entrepreneurs and community organizers to bring their dreams to life. Founded in 2010 by recent Penn State graduates, New Leaf connects aspiring change-makers with the skills, resources, partnerships, and support needed to develop and launch successful projects like Food Centres, a network of local food hubs designed to reduce food insecurity in Centre County, PA.

In a city that is economically dependent on upon its university, a county that produces just .05% of the food its residents consume, and a state that is seeking economic alternatives to the coal economy, New Leaf Initiative and Transition Centre are exploring strategies for building a resilient local economy, including developing an economic dashboard that would measure resource flows and the impact of different types of businesses on the local economy.
15. **Old River Road Trading Post**  
Paonia, CO

The Old River Road Trading Post is a farm, market and learning center that supports the local organic food movement in Paonia, Colorado by providing a commercial kitchen space and storefront for local food producers and artisans to process and sell fresh produce and value-added goods, including breads, jams, syrups, ice cream, pickled and fermented foods, salsas and sauces, pre-made soups, and more. Several days a week the Trading Post kitchen offers meals cooked by local chefs, and on Sundays there is a donation-based community lunch — all featuring local organic ingredients.

The Trading Post operates its own local currency, “PostNotes,” which are complemented by a membership system to encourage patronage and accessibility by offering discounts to members. The Trading Post is volunteer-powered, and volunteers can receive PostNotes in exchange for their service. The Trading Post regularly hosts workshops, concerts, and other community gatherings, serving as a food, farm, and community hub.

16. **Our Table Cooperative**  
Sherwood, OR

Our Table is a farm and grocery cooperative in Sherwood, Oregon with three classes of members: consumers, workers, and regional producers. Our Table is committed to appropriate localization, aiming to source over 80% of goods sold in its store from producer-members.

The cooperative sells its goods under a signature red and white label, signifying to consumers that the producers operate in Oregon, farm without pesticides, treat their animals ethically, and pay their workers fairly. When grocery items (like chocolate and coffee) can’t be produced regionally, Our Table ensures the importer is based locally and has a relationship with the growers. In a YES! Magazine article, Our Table co-founder sums up this philosophy as “no faceless transactions.”
Pedal People is a worker-owned, bicycle-powered delivery and hauling service in Northampton, Massachusetts. Customers can arrange to have Pedal Power deliver their envelopes and packages, groceries or farm share box, or even furniture.

Pedal People also offers regular pick up of trash, recycling, compost; as well as bike workshops and fossil fuel-free yard care services.

Piedmont Biofuels is a community-scale biodiesel project that converts waste fats, oils, and greases into biodiesel fuel, which it provides to its consumer cooperative. Piedmont has designed and built dozens of biodiesel production facilities, has sold oil seed presses, and done extensive research and analysis on biodiesel production. It actively consults on technology, fuel quality, and regulatory compliance. Piedmont has done extensive public education on sustainability.

Located at The Plant, in Pittsboro, NC, Piedmont has fostered many resilience-based businesses. These range from hydroponics and aquaponics to a sustainable farm onsite. It has deployed active and passive solar for heat and electricity, and has demonstrated success with a variety of green building strategies.
19. **Real Pickles**  
Greenfield, MA

Real Pickles is a worker-owned cooperative based in Greenfield, Massachusetts that produces raw, organic, fermented foods in a solar-powered facility.

Committed to building a vibrant regional food system, Real Pickles sources its produce from family farms in the Northeast and sells its products only within the Northeast. In 2013, with support from Cutting Edge Capital, Real Pickles financed its transition to a worker-owned cooperative through a Direct Public Offering that raised $500,000 in just two months!

Learn more about DPOs and other local investment strategies in the “Local Dollars, Local Sense” webinar recording.

Above: photo courtesy of Real Pickles.

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20. **Renaissance Community Coop**  
Greensboro, NC

Renaissance Community Cooperative (RCC) is a community-led effort to open a community-owned grocery store in northeast Greensboro, North Carolina, an area that has been a food desert for more than 16 years.

Community members have been organizing to form RCC for more than four years, and have successfully raised more than $1.7 million of the estimated $2.1 million required to finance the store through owner equity, grassroots fundraising, grants, loans, and support from the Fund for Democratic Communities. RCC plans to open its doors in late 2016, providing access to living-wage jobs and high-quality food in a predominantly African-American and low-income neighborhood.

We want a coop where community health and wealth grow with every purchase.

Image courtesy of RCC.

renaisancecoop.com
Salish Sea Cooperative Finance (SSCoFi) is a newly-launched cooperative social enterprise that refinances high-interest student loans by reinvesting its members’ financial resources. Member-owners include debtors, partners, and investors.

Formed as a response to the national student debt crisis, SSCoFi refinances student loans at lower rates and returns dividends to investor-members. SSCoFi also supports its debtor-members through fiscal education, mentorship, and community.

“Salish Sea Cooperative Finance... began with a series of intergenerational meetings in Washington state, where the Gen Xers present began to grasp just how much student debt was crippling recent college graduates... After the refinancing, rather than leaving the borrowers to fend for themselves, the model calls on well-connected friends to mentor and help them find the sources of income they’ll need.” -YES! Magazine article “For these Borrowers and Lenders, Debt is a Relationship Based on Love.”

Share Exchange is a local economy center based in Santa Rosa, California, a physical space that houses a number of complementary local economy initiatives: a Made Local Marketplace for locally-manufactured goods, the North Bay Made marketing campaign promoting a vibrant regional economy in Northern California, the Share Space coworking center, an event and meeting space, the North Bay Small Business Incubator, and the non-profit Local Economy Institute dedicated to research, education, and promotion of thriving local economies.
Soul Fire Farm is a Certified Naturally Grown family farm, community resource, and vessel for education in Grafton, New York. Featured in YES! Magazine for their work on restorative justice, founders of Soul Fire Farm Leah Penniman and Jonah Vitale Wolff are committed to food sovereignty, or “the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.”

In addition to its restorative justice program, Soul Fire Farm offers an immersion program to provide novice Black and Latino farmers with training in hand-scale farming. The farm’s revenue streams include a sliding scale farm share/CSA and additional sales of farm products including chickens, herbal salves, and more.

Transition Lab is an alternative higher education program based in Montrose, Colorado that provides students with the personal and professional skills they need to build a resilient future: Permaculture and local organic agriculture, natural building and affordable housing, alternative economics and regenerative business development, community building and organizing, mindfulness, communication and conflict resolution, leadership, and more.

Transition Lab relies heavily on relationships and alternative economic models to reduce the financial cost to participants and prepare them to live a lifestyle that is free from dependence on material wealth.
True Grass Farms is a 1,000+ acre, family-owned-and-operated farm in Valley Ford, California that utilizes rotational grazing practices to rejuvenate degraded rangeland into biologically diverse, highly productive, drought-resistant and carbon-sequestering oak savanna ecosystems.

True Grass Farms is dedicated to the preservation of its land, community, and ecosystem, and sustains itself financially through sales of meat (beef, pork, lamb, and chicken) and eggs from its humanely raised livestock.

“For us, it all begins with the grass. We commit ourselves to maintaining healthy pastureland by embracing a process of rotational grazing that depends upon the stewardship of a natural ecosystem—of which we as well as the grass are only two elements.” – Guido Frosini, True Grass Farms
Criteria for Resilience Building Enterprises

The enterprises highlighted in this report were selected because they largely fulfill the following criteria for resilience-building enterprises (originally developed by the Transition Network REconomy team).

1. Appropriate localization:
Enterprises operate at a scale appropriate to the environment, the needs they are meeting, and their business sector, with regard to sourcing, distribution, and interaction with the wider economy. They don’t all have to grow endlessly. They provide local goods for local people as locally as possible, where this makes sense.

2. Appropriate resource use:
Enterprises make efficient and appropriate use of natural resources, respecting finite limits and minimizing and integrating waste streams. The use of fossil fuels is minimized, and use of renewable energy sources maximized.

3. Serve a purpose greater than profit:
Enterprises aim to provide affordable, sustainable products and services and decent livelihoods, rather than just generate excessive profits for others. Enterprises can be profitable, but excess profits are used for wider benefit rather than just enriching individuals.

4. Part of the community:
Enterprises work toward building a common wealth, owned and controlled as much as is practical by their workers, customers, tenants and communities. They treat and pay all workers fairly. Their structures are as open, equitable, democratic, inclusive and accountable as possible. They consciously operate as part of a collaborative and mutually supportive local system.

5. Strengthen community resilience:
Enterprises help ensure the main needs of the community are met despite wider economic instability, energy and resource shortages and global warming impacts. Enterprises are also resilient in themselves, seeking to be financially sustainable and as independent of external funding as possible.

Learn more about REconomy on the Transition US REconomy page or the Transition Network REconomy Project website.
### 1. Appropriate Localization

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Sources and distributes goods or services as locally as possible relative to given sector</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Values localization and doesn’t intend to grow endlessly</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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### 2. Appropriate Resource Use

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Minimizes use of fossil fuels</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Maximizes use of renewable energy sources</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Minimizes waste and pollution</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Minimizes/eliminates use of limited natural resources (ex: rare earth minerals, vulnerable plant &amp; animal species, etc.)</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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### 3. More Than Profit

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<tr>
<td>A. Meets a real community need (ex: food, housing, transportation, ecosystem health, etc.)</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Has the goal or intention of providing affordable, sustainable products and services to consumers</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Has the goal or intention of providing decent livelihoods to employees</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Does not generate excessive profit exclusively for management or investors</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Invests excess profit in the community</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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### 4. Part of the Community

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<tr>
<td>A. Utilizes democratic governance structures</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Treats &amp; pays workers fairly (at least a living wage if the enterprise is profitable)</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Has the goal or intention of building common wealth</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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### 5. Strengthens Community Resilience

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<tr>
<td>A. Has the intention of meeting a community need despite wider economic instability, energy and resource shortages and global warming impacts</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Is financially sustainable</td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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**Jump-Starting Your REconomy Project**

Are you ready to start transforming your local economy or create your own resilience-building enterprise? Visit the following websites for additional resources to help you get started:

**Transition US REconomy Project**
REconomy-related Teleseminar recordings on the financial and economic systems, local investing, cooperatives and community enterprise, economic assessments, and more

**Transition Network REconomy Project**
www.REconomy.org
(please note: many of these resources are based on the UK context, but are still useful to those outside the UK)

1. Set of how-to guides on
   - Starting a Transition Enterprise
   - Hosting a local REconomy-related event, and
   - Transition Core Resourcing
2. Economic blueprints and evaluations that identify significant opportunities for cultivating resilience-building enterprises
3. Examples of economic enablers
4. Tips for starting a local REconomy Project
5. More examples of inspiring enterprises

**Additional Resources**

New Economy Coalition
http://neweconomy.net


Cheerful disclaimer: Like the rest of Transition, the REconomy Project is an experiment, a real live economic laboratory at the community level, and we are all learning as we go. We don’t pretend to have all the answers, but we share stories and resources that seem to work, based on our current understanding, and with the best of intentions. The REconomy Project is part of the Transition Network.

Thanks for reading!