



The Cooperative Principles and Their Application to CMS

The Cooperative Memorial Society (CMS) operates in alignment with the internationally recognized **Seven Cooperative Principles**, which serve as the foundation for all cooperatives worldwide. These principles guide our governance, operations, and services, ensuring that we remain focused on meeting the needs of our members and supporting our mission of providing affordable, dignified, and accessible end-of-life planning.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are open to all individuals willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without discrimination.

At CMS, membership is open to everyone, regardless of background, age, or beliefs. We believe that every individual should have access to affordable and compassionate end-of-life planning, and we are committed to removing barriers to participation.

2. Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

CMS members elect the Board of Directors and participate in annual meetings, ensuring that the organization reflects their needs and priorities. This democratic structure empowers members to have a direct voice in shaping the future of CMS.

3. Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative.

Through modest membership fees, CMS members collectively fund the organization, enabling us to negotiate affordable funeral services and maintain the tools and resources necessary for advanced planning. Members benefit directly from these efforts, ensuring value and cost savings.

4. Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.

CMS operates independently of external influence, allowing us to prioritize the needs and interests of our members without being driven by profit motives. This autonomy ensures that we remain true to our mission and values.

5. Education, Training, and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, and employees to contribute effectively to the development of the cooperative.

CMS provides members with educational workshops, presentations, and resources to help them make informed decisions about end-of-life planning. We also equip our directors and volunteers with the knowledge they need to effectively support the organization's goals.

6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together.

CMS has a long history of collaborating with other cooperatives and organizations, such as Calgary Co-op, to expand our reach and impact. These partnerships enable us to advocate for better services and promote the cooperative model within our community.

7. Concern for Community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies and programs.

CMS embodies this principle by providing services that alleviate financial and emotional stress for families, fostering a compassionate and supportive community. Our efforts to educate Albertans about end-of-life planning contribute to the overall well-being and preparedness of our society.

By adhering to these principles, CMS remains a values-driven organization dedicated to serving its members and the broader community. They ensure that our cooperative identity is reflected in every aspect of our work, from governance to member services.

Prepared by Terry Geib, Executive Director