Solidarity Economies in God's Creation

October 12, 2025

The Rev. Canon Marie A. Tatro (she/any)
Canon for Community Justice Ministry, Episcopal Diocese of Long Island, Bishop's Senior Staff And Priest Associate at St. Ann & the Holy Trinity

&

Katy Lasell, *Policy Associate* (she/her), New Economy Project

Exodus [22:25] - “If you lend money to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them.”

Deuteronomy [23:19-20] - “You shall not charge interest on loans to another Israelite, interest on money, interest on provisions, interest on anything that is lent.”

However, Nehemiah 5:7-13 expands that view and condemns it further, giving examples of its negative consequences on Israel as a whole. Ezekiel [18:13] goes even further, saying that anyone who “takes advance or accrued interest,” along with a few other sins, is to be put to death!

Leviticus [25:35-37] “If any of your kin fall into difficulty and become dependent on you, you shall support them; they shall live with you as though resident aliens. Do not take interest in advance or otherwise make a profit from them, but fear your God; let them live with you. You shall not lend them your money at interest taken in advance, or provide them food at a profit.”

The Book of Acts describes the first Christian community —(for which there was basically open membership: Jews, Gentiles, pagans, all races)— sharing all things in common.

“All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.” [Acts 2:44-45]

“Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. [4:32-35]

The law of Moses also included provisions to prevent extreme poverty and inequality, such as the Year of Jubilee, which returned land to its original owners every 50 years and canceled debts. [Leviticus 25:10]

Stewardship of the Land: Hebrew Scriptures emphasized that all land belonged to God, and humans were merely stewards or tenants. [Leviticus 25:23-24]

The Gleaning Principle: God commanded landowners to leave the corners and edges of their fields unharvested. This allowed the poor to go into the fields and gather food for themselves, providing a direct and communal way to ensure they had sustenance. [Leviticus 19:9-10, Deuteronomy 24:19-21, The Book of Ruth 2:2,15-16, and several of the prophetic books]

• Respect for the dignity and worth of each person shapes all economic decisions and systems, with particular care for families, children and especially our poor, vulnerable and marginalized neighbors.

• Each person has sufficient opportunities and the freedom to access whatever resources are needed to fully develop their unique talents and abilities.

• Economic decisions prioritize people over profit and first serve the needs of the people rather than the people serving the needs of those who control the economy.

• Workers are valued and rewarded for their creativity with truly living wages and benefits, and the right to unionize and collectively bargain to improve their workplace conditions.

• Personal success and worth are measured by what we contribute to others in family and community rather than by what we amass for ourselves.

• Property, productivity and economic growth are valued for how they serve the common good, not for how much they boost profits or grow personal wealth.

• Competition is tempered by a spirit of care for one another and for Long Island, like a clean environment, public health and the well-being of our homes, families, and communities.

A just, humane economy builds secure homes, families, workplaces and communities where we can experience creativity, companionship, relaxation, recreation, contemplation, intellectual stimulation and spiritual regeneration.

Equity Agenda Coalition

Fighting for a Solidarity Economy in NYS

New Economy Project: Who are we?

New Economy Project's mission is to build a just economy, rooted in cooperation, neighborhood and racial equity, and ecological sustainability.

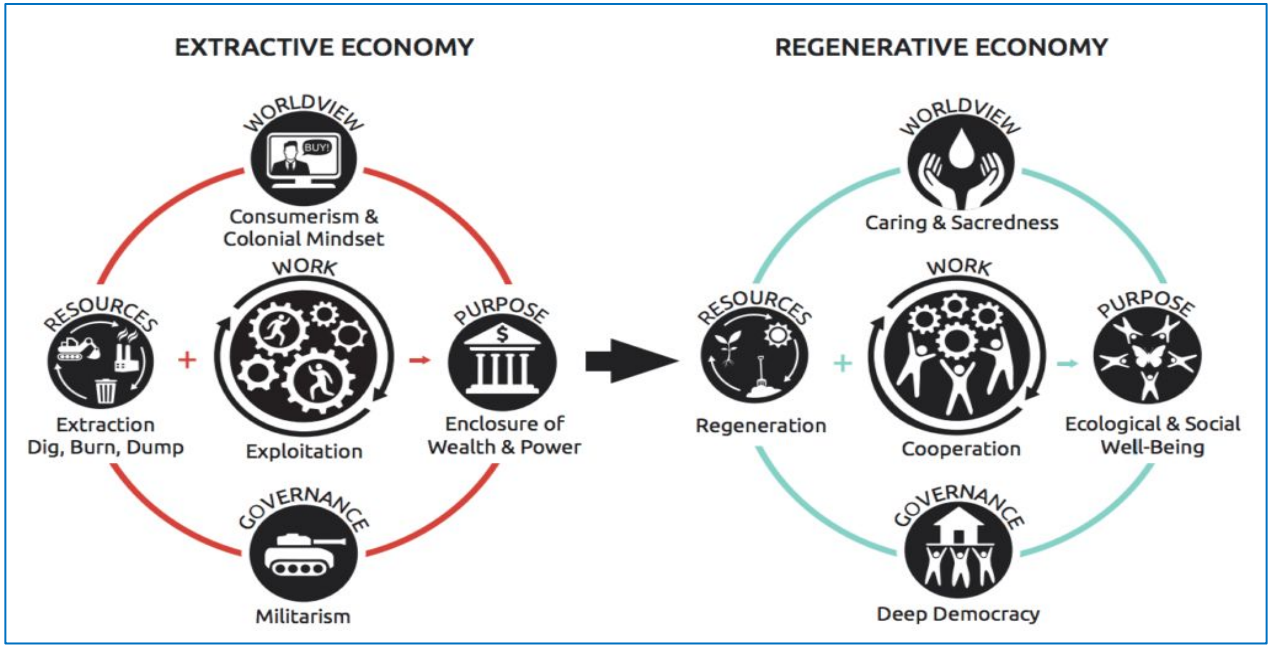
Solidarity/Cooperative/Regenerative Economy

The solidarity economy is a global movement to build a just and sustainable economy where we prioritize people and the planet over endless profit and growth. Growing out of social movements in Latin America and the Global South, the solidarity economy provides real alternatives to capitalism, where communities govern themselves through participatory democracy, cooperative and public ownership, and a culture of solidarity and respect for the earth.

New Economy Project

Solidarity/Cooperative/Regenerative Economy

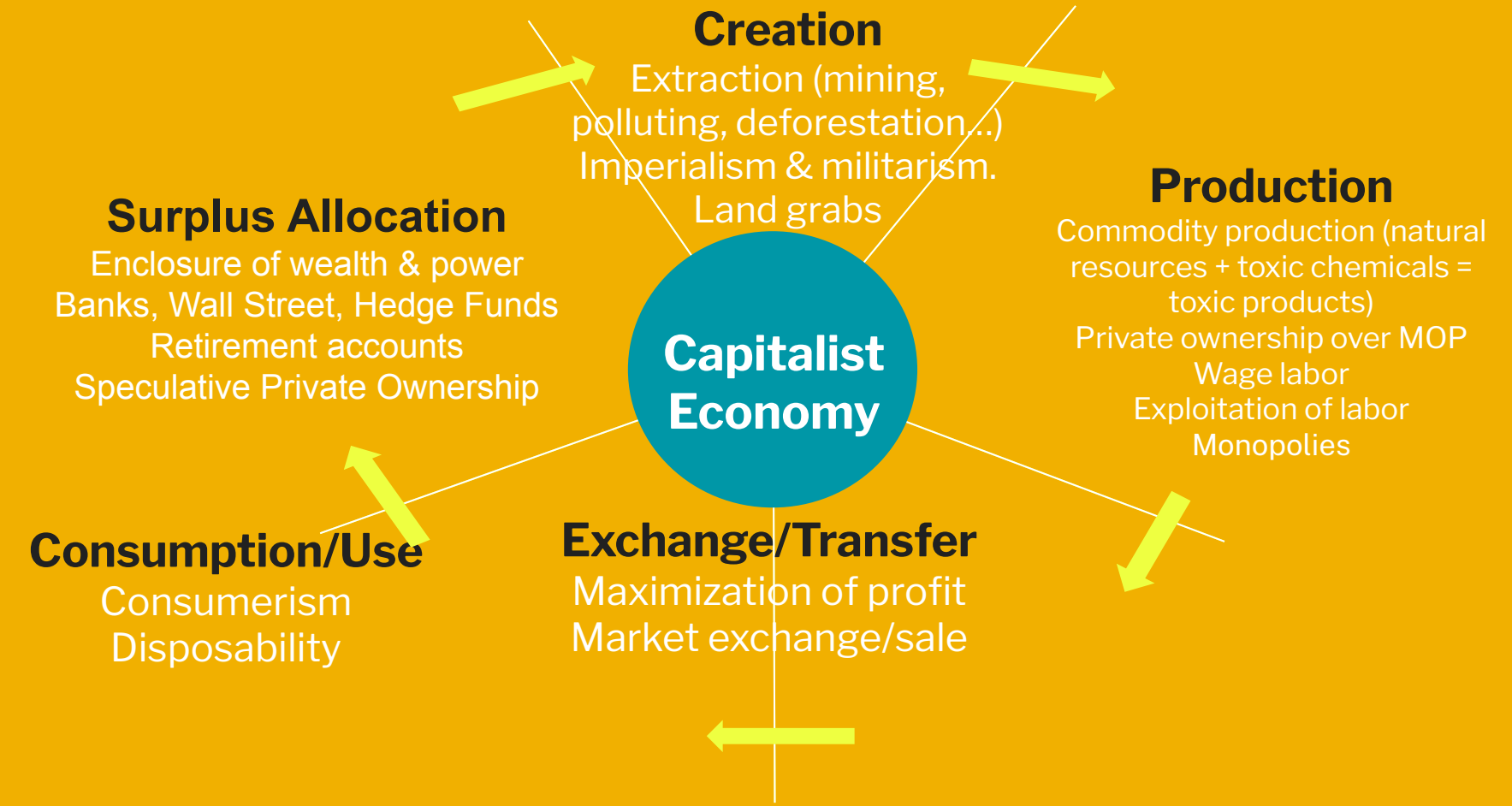
- Building *and* resisting
- Systems change (not reform)
- Participatory decision-making
- Shared ownership
- Regenerative, not extractive
- Just transition



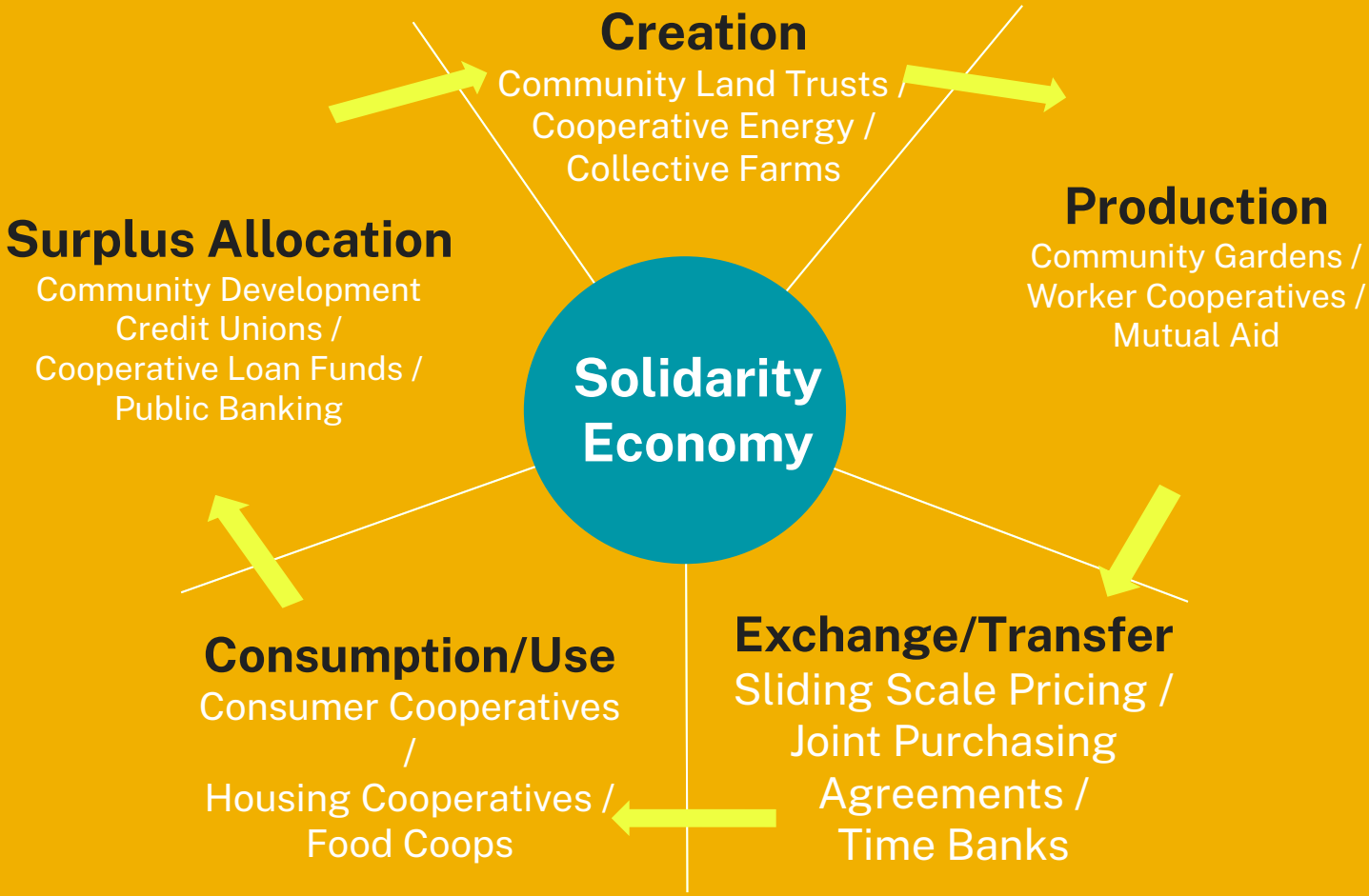
Climate Justice Alliance

New Economy Project

Capitalism


Creation
Extraction (mining, polluting, deforestation...)
Imperialism & militarism.
Land grabs
Production
Commodity production (natural resources + toxic chemicals = toxic products)
Private ownership over MOP
Wage labor
Exploitation of labor
Monopolies
Exchange/Transfer
Maximization of profit
Market exchange/sale
Consumption/Use
Consumerism
Disposability
Surplus Allocation
Enclosure of wealth & power
Banks, Wall Street, Hedge Funds
Retirement accounts
Speculative Private Ownership
Capitalist Economy

Solidarity Economy



Equity Agenda: Who are we?

The **NYS Equity Agenda** is a statewide coalition of more than 50 community, labor, civil rights, and legal services groups, cooperative organizations, and community development financial institutions. **We fight together for:**

- **an affirmative, solutions-oriented platform that currently includes legislation to:**
  - stop predatory lending
  - support the creation of public banks & strengthening of CDFIs
  - foster worker cooperatives
- **cooperative institutions and an overall solidarity economy that:**
  - is led by and supports Black, brown, and working class New Yorkers and communities
  - puts people before profit and communities before corporations
  - builds wealth, power, resiliency and self-determination of our communities

New Economy Project

Stopping Predatory Lending

- NYS has strong usury laws: **felony to charge more than 25% interest on a loan,** making payday lending and other forms of predatory lending illegal.
- **However, predatory lenders continually masterminding new ways to circumvent our law and trap low-income people and people of color in cycles of debt** with high-interest loans. Some are charging interest rates as high as 820%.
- **One particularly aggressive industry is the payday loan app industry:**
  - Silicon Valley-funded, ALEC-backed emergent industry, “Earned Wage Access.” Rebranded payday lending into an accessible and flashy app form.
  - Waging an aggressive, state-by-state campaign to win favorable licensing regimes that allow them to keep pushing their predatory products. Arguing their products aren’t loans.
  - A.G. James sued industry leaders DailyPay and MoneyLion for exploiting New Yorkers. CFPB has affirmed these products aren’t loan.

New Economy Project

End Loan Sharking Act

S1726 - Senator Samra Brouk from Rochester

A4918 - Assembly Member Steven Raga from Queens

Predatory lending models target low-income communities and Black and brown communities, extracting massive amounts of wealth. *ELSA makes it clear that predatory lending has no place in New York State!*

Stopping Predatory Lending

- The ***End Loan Sharking Act*** **stops predatory lenders from pushing loans on New Yorkers with usurious interest rates.** This bill would make clear that New York's existing usury laws apply to all lenders, no matter what deceptive marketing tactics the industry tries next. It would ensure that extractive lenders like the "earned wage access" (EWA), "rent-to-own," litigation financing and others can't issue predatory loans.

- **Standalone bill that will just focus on payday loan app industry > focus for this year!**

New Economy Project

Promoting Public Banking

A bank **created by a government entity, owned by the public,** and **operated for the public good**.

A public bank for NYC would:

- Hold public funds (currently held by private institutions that redline, invest in fossil fuels, etc.)
- Invest in deeply affordable housing, small and worker-owned businesses, renewable energy, and other community economic development initiatives.
- Advance racial, social, and environmental equity and justice
- Partner with CDFIs

New Economy Project

Promoting Public Banking

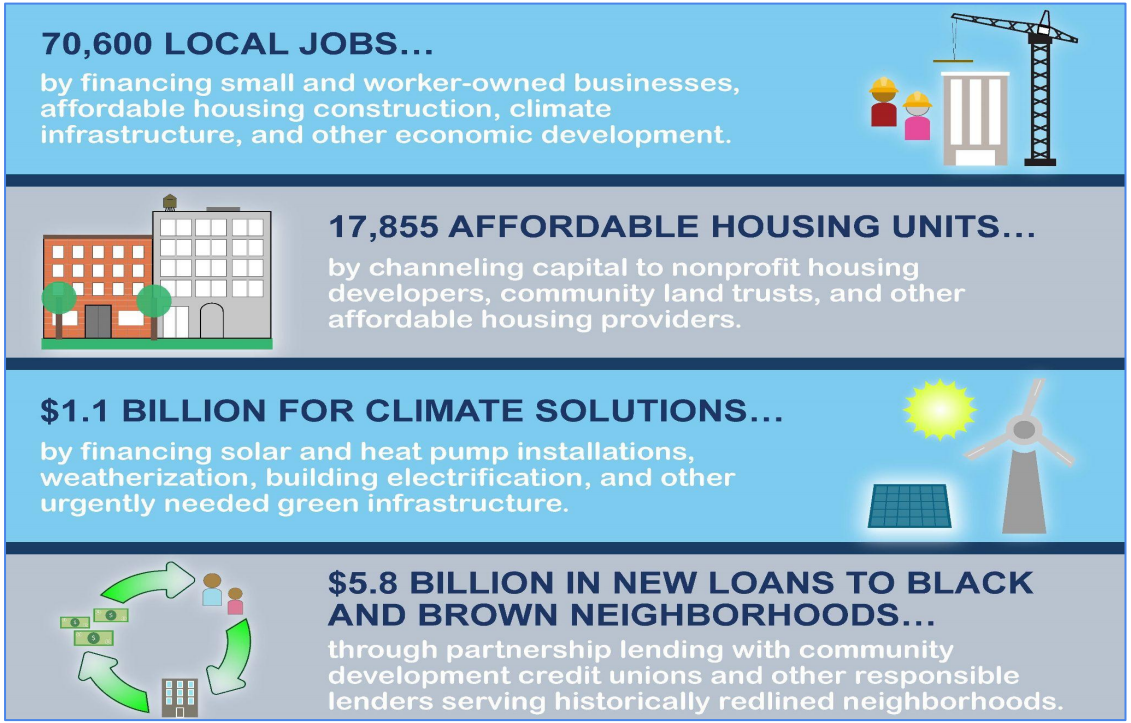
- The *New York Public Banking Act* creates an **urgently needed regulatory framework for local public banks in New York.**
- In addition, cities from Rochester to New York City are advancing home rule legislation to bring public banking to their municipalities.

New Economy Project

New Economy Project

Promoting Public Banking

Economic Impact: NYC public bank's 5-yr start-up phase:



New Economy Project

Promoting Community Development Financial Institutions

Financial institutions with an **explicit community development mission** of serving historically redlined communities.

Key Characteristics:

Channel capital, training and ongoing support to:

- Small and worker-owned businesses
- Affordable housing development
- Commercial and community development
- Climate solutions

New Economy Project

Spotlight on CDFI Credit Unions

Structure & Other Info:

- Not-for-profit
- Cooperatively owned and governed by members
- Serve a specific geographic area or other “Field of Membership”
- Services are geared to low-income, Black and brown, and immigrant communities
- Deposits are federally-insured up to $250,000

New Economy Project

CDFI Credit Unions in NYC

Brooklyn Federal Credit Union Coop
la cooperativa de ahorro y crédito

Lower East Side people's federal credit union

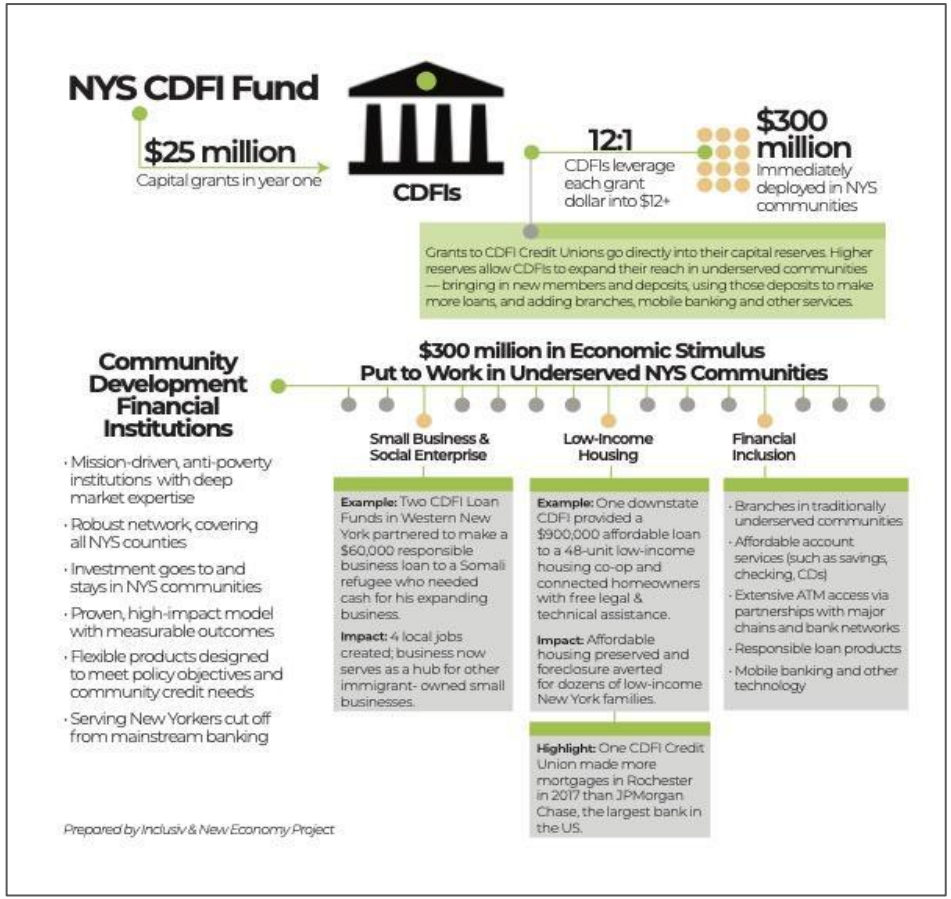
NEIGHBORHOOD TRUST FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

URBAN UPBOUND
Tackling Poverty, Changing Lives

New Economy Project

Promoting Community Development Financial Institutions

- Fought and WON $25 million over 5 years for the state's CDFI fund
- Need to keep up the fight to:
  - Ensure all that money actually ends up in the fund, and is accessible to CDFIs
  - Expand the fund!



Promoting worker-owned businesses

Values-driven businesses that put **worker and community benefit** at the core.

Key Attributes:

- Workers collectively **own the business**.
- Workers have **representation on and vote for the board of directors** – one worker, one vote.

– Democracy at Work Institute

New Economy Project

Promoting worker-owned businesses

- Worker cooperatives are a critical pillar of the solidarity economy, **helping workers and communities establish economic self-sufficiency through democratic stewardship of our workplaces.**

- **A *NYS Worker Ownership Center* would support the development of worker-owned businesses across New York.**
  - The Center would give workers the tools they need to start and operate successful cooperative enterprises.
  - It will also assist workers in purchasing businesses at risk of either closing or being sold to private equity and big out-of-state corporations, helping to preserve an estimated 13,000 New York jobs now lost each year due to owner retirement.

New Economy Project

TAKE ACTION this year with the Equity Agenda coalition!

- **Join our listserv and meetings!**
  - Monthly coalition meetings
  - Monthly working group meetings (Stopping Predatory Lending; Public Banking; Worker Co-ops)
- **Campaign with us**—we can support you to do any or all of this, and more!
  - **Table at community events to distribute postcards** to identify and lift up the stories of payday loan app users
  - **Host a teach-in / phonebank about one or more of our bills** - virtual or at a community event.
  - **Lobby with us:**
    - Come to Albany with us
    - Lobby your legislator in district

THANK YOU!