Creative Arts Workshop is an anchor institution in New Haven’s Audubon Arts District and the largest community arts school in Connecticut. It offers educational courses and workshops in nine visual media, features fully-equipped studio space, exhibition galleries, and a retail boutique. Established in 1961 by members of the Yale community, it annually serves about 1,600 students of all ages and skill levels, with over 400 programs ranging from one day to 10 weeks, delivered by over 50 faculty members. It is an essential part of the creative economy of New Haven.

Like other organizations founded around the same time, CAW is recalibrating its relevancy and addressing sustainability. Its new leadership is seeking entrepreneurial solutions, including new business models such as a cooperative to help it thrive—and potentially extend those benefits to other organizations in the arts and culture ecosystem. And, it realizes these same benefits may be extensible to the nonprofit sector at large.

This position is sponsored by the Executive Director and reports to the Volunteer Lead – Community Planning Group.

The Opportunity
The nature of the position involves both research and active engagement with an ad hoc group comprising representatives from over 15 organizations. The opportunity is (1) to engage with a variety of mentors from different industries, (2) to become conversant with specific nonprofit issues, (3) to make concrete contributions within the context of ambiguously defined goals and constituencies, and (4) to have fun while exploring career interests.

The Issues
For over a year, industry colleagues have discussed ways to confront two issues facing the nonprofit sector: (I) the proliferation of small, unsustainable organizations, and (II) the increasing costs and complexity of non-mission-related activities involving (a) facilities, (b) technology, and (c) operations.

The Project
The project is intended: (1) to assess the two issues in a context discerned and abstracted from interviews and research, (2) to facilitate charrettes to discuss results, processes and experiences, stimulate stakeholder interest, gather additional data and prompt problem solving, and (3) to deliver a short, written actionable plan based on findings, analysis and recommendations.

There are two primary tasks: (1) to become familiar with (a) legal entities classified as “cooperatives” and (b) legal arrangements called “fiscal sponsorships,” and (2) to develop a plan that: (a) describes the process of forming a cooperative, (b) recommends either converting an existing nonprofit into a cooperative or incubating a new one, (c) recommends how to leverage fiscal sponsorship.

Requirements
Personal qualities compatible with and confident about the nature and ambiguity of the work described.

Anne Coates, Executive Director (acoates@creativeartworkshop.org)
For nearly 30 years, Anne has held senior leadership positions with arts organization in New York City. Her mentorship is warm, informed and insightful, assuring a positive and enriching experience for this project.

If you’re interested in applying, email Anne directly.