

# "My Credit Union: It Belongs to Me"

## *The Credit Union Difference: Ownership!*

CREDIT UNIONS	BANKS
<p><b>Cooperatives:</b> Credit Unions are owned by the people they serve (the members). They are member-owned cooperatives (co-ops).</p>	<p>Banks report to an outside group of stockholders.</p>
<p><b>A Voice:</b> The member-owners elect the persons serving on the Credit Union Board of Directors by vote at the Annual Membership Meeting.</p>	<p>Board of Directors are elected by the stockholders of the bank and placed on the ballot by officers of the bank.</p>
<p><b>Volunteers:</b> The Board of Directors are (unpaid) volunteers; and receive no remuneration for serving. More than 120,000 people serve as credit union volunteers in the USA.</p>	<p>Bank Board of Directors receive a monthly salary for their positions.</p>
<p><b>Not-for-Profit:</b> Credit Unions are not-for-profit financial cooperatives that operate to provide low-cost financial services to their member-owners.</p>	<p>Banks need to earn profit in order to pay their Board of Directors salaries and dividends to their stockholders.</p>
<p><b>Democracy:</b> Each member in good standing has equal ownership and one vote, regardless of how much money they have on deposit.</p>	<p>Bank customers do not have a vote (or voice) regarding who is on the Board of Directors. Typically its persons with significant money invested.</p>
<p><b>Save Money:</b> Consumers who use a credit union as their primary financial institution save an average of \$204 a year in fees and service charges.</p>	<p>Banks are in business to make a profit.</p>

Sources: Credit Union National Association ([www.cuna.coop](http://www.cuna.coop)); World Council of Credit Unions ([www.woccu.org](http://www.woccu.org)) and the Michigan Credit Union League ([www.mcul.org](http://www.mcul.org)) and the Wall Street Journal.