

Board of Directors

Candidate Application Package

Thank you for your interest in serving on the Board of Canada's largest independent consumer-owned retail food co-operative! From its humble beginnings in the 1970s as a group of buying clubs in the region, the Kootenay Co-op has grown over the past four decades into a thriving social enterprise with more than 14,000 members and annual sales in excess of \$15M.

Why apply to stand for election as a Board Director?



Mission-driven and guided by the international cooperative principles, the Kootenay Co-op plays an ever-increasing role in the social, economic and environmental sustainability of our region. We are a significant retailer of local/regional foods and products in the area, acting as the sole or primary retailer for dozens of small businesses. The Co-op provides a right livelihood for its 160 employees and supports a wide variety of community groups and non-profit organizations through our outreach programs.

The Co-op's Board of Directors therefore plays an important role in the future well-being of our community and is part of a model for how a community can democratically take control of its food supply. Similar to any corporation, the Co-op's Board works on behalf of our owners. What sets the Co-op apart is that in a consumer-owned cooperative the owners are people you know -- your friends, neighbours, family and colleagues!

"In 2004 I was honoured to be elected by our member-owners to sit on the Board of Directors. Over the years I have had the pleasure of working with many dedicated Directors and wonderful staff members, who all share a common passion for this vibrant, values-based and incredible Co-op."

- Abra Brynne, Board President

Director Roles & Responsibilities

- Set the strategic long-range direction of the cooperative as a representative of the Co-op's membership.
- Hire and evaluate the General Manager, who oversees operations.
- Hold ultimate accountability for all organizational activities, including sound management of the Co-op's resources and its professional performance.
- Act as trustees on behalf of the Co-op's members.
- Focus on the definition of the Co-op's mission: strategic leadership and governance more than operational detail, distinction of board and staff roles, and proactivity rather than reactivity.

Director Benefits

- Developing professional skills in leadership, teamwork and management.
- Building professional & personal relationships.
- Access to training opportunities offered by the Co-op and its affiliates.
- Monthly honorarium in store credit.
- Chance to make a difference in your community.

We hope this package will provide you with valuable information to help you make a decision about standing for election to our Board.



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Are you a good fit for the Co-op? Is the Co-op a good fit for you?

All eligible Co-op members may stand as nominees for the Board of Directors. When looking ahead to attract new Directors, the Board seeks out specific skill sets to enhance those of the existing Board. The following is a list of some of those skills that may be sought out (in no particular order):

- Previous experience on a board of directors
- Understanding of the Cooperative Principles
- Ability to read and comprehend financial statements
- Excellent communication and collaborative decision-making skills
- Ability to support group decisions regardless of personal opinions
- Ability to maintain confidentiality
- Skills and experience in: retail or wholesale grocery business, natural foods, nutrition, real estate/property management, business law, finance/accounting, marketing, organic food production

Candidate Requirements

In order to be deemed eligible to stand for election, potential candidates must:

- Be a fully-subscribed member in good standing of the Kootenay Co-op at least 30 calendar days prior to the nomination
- Candidates must be at least 18 years of age as of September 1 of the election year
- Commit to at least one two-year term
- Formally declare their willingness to stand for election and return their application before May 31
- Exhibit a commitment to the Mission and Vision of the Kootenay Co-op and be willing to represent the interests of the membership
- Attend at least one regular board meeting after submitting your application and prior to declaring your candidacy (may be after May 31)
- Attend an informal interview with a current Board Director and General Manager
- Disclose any conflicts of interest and be able to sign the Board of Directors Statement of Agreement

Election Timeline & Process

March Call for Directors

May Potential Board Candidate Application must be submitted by May 31

May/June The Board and GM will conduct interviews with potential candidates

June Candidate eligibility confirmed by June 30

August/September Candidate information available. Meet-the-Candidates forum. Pre-AGM ballots available for in-store voting.

September Election at AGM

Please contact the Board President via email, board@kootenay.coop or the General Manager at the store 250-354-4077, to arrange for your attendance at a Board meeting. Attendance at a Board meeting may require signing of a non-disclosure agreement.

Our Statement of Principles:

The Kootenay Country Store Cooperative is an association which provides high quality, wholesome food at reasonable prices to residents of Nelson and surrounding areas.

We believe that where possible, such food should be organically produced and that local growers or processors would receive preferential treatment as suppliers.

We believe in the principles of community cooperation and further this principle through educational programs and any other means available.

We believe in building a truly democratic organization with complete member involvement, where the principle of one person, one vote will be adhered to irrespective of the number of shares held by any individual.



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The Kootenay Country Store Co-operative Mission Statement

To promote community involvement by cultivating a cooperative, sustainable, organic way of life through:

- Providing the highest quality, affordable natural foods and products, and wherever possible organic, in a pleasant, comfortable environment.
- Serving members effectively
- Encouraging a healthy local economy
- Community and member education
- Maintaining the financial health of the Cooperative
- Promoting community interchange of ideas
- Providing a workplace that reflects these values



The Co-operative Values and Principles

Co-operative Values

Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Co-operative Principles

1. **Open and voluntary membership.** Co-operatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.
2. **Democratic member control.** Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policy and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.
3. **Member economic participation.** Members contribute equity to and democratically control the capital of the co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the co-operative (possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible); distributing to members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.
4. **Autonomy and independence.** Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with or raise capital from other organizations, including governments or external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.
5. **Education, training and information.** Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public – particularly young people and opinion leaders – about the nature and benefits of cooperation.
6. **Cooperation among co-operatives.** Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.
7. **Concern for the community.** While focusing on member needs, co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.



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