East End Food Co-op Board of Directors
2026 Candidate Declaration Packet

The East End Food Co-op is founded on and operates by the ideas of member-ownership and dedication to the co-operative principles. In addition to local, organic, sustainable, and healthy food, the Co-op offers community to its member-owners and to the entire Pittsburgh region.

As our organization takes concrete steps toward expansion, something we have discussed for many years, we need prudent and visionary leadership. Many important decisions will need to be made, and defining the process for making those decisions within a co-operative business structure will be as challenging as making the decisions themselves. Our Co-op is a community of dedicated members who believe that together we can create a vision to transform the future. It is certainly an exciting time to serve on the Co-op's Board of Directors.

Thank you for your interest in candidacy for the Board of Directors of the East End Food Co-op. All of the information you need to apply for candidacy can be found in this packet, as well as important background information on co-ops in general and the duties and responsibilities of the Board.

Board of Directors Application Process & Timeline

Requirements for Board Service

To serve on the Board of Directors, candidates must be Co-op members in good standing, at least 18 years old, and must not have an overriding conflict of interest with service on the Board.

How to Declare Your Candidacy

To become a Candidate for the Board of Directors, prospective candidates must submit:

- a completed Declaration of Candidacy form (below)
- a current résumé
- a completed "Questions for the Candidate" (below)
- a photograph of yourself

The "Questions for the Candidate" information and photo will be made available to members.

Completed packets must be submitted to boardofdirectors@eastendfood.coop or the Customer Service desk before close of business (8:00 PM) on Sunday, October 4, 2026.

Voting and Elections

Ballots will be available for members on Sunday, October 19, through end of business on Sunday, November 29. After the results are confirmed, new Directors will be seated at the December 16 Board of Directors' monthly meeting.

New Directors' Training

Training for new Directors is part of the annual Board of Directors retreat, typically held on a weekend in early January.

Co-operative Identity and Principles

The founding principles of the co-operative movement — known as the Rochdale Principles — are generally accepted by all co-ops around the world. The principles are named for the "first modern food co-op," which was established in Rochdale, England, in 1844. The International Co-operative Alliance maintains a Statement of Co-operative Identity, including seven principles derived from the original Rochdale Principles. Those are reprinted here:

Definition

A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

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.

Principles

The co-operative principles are guidelines by which co-operatives put their values into practice.

1st Principle: Voluntary and Open 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.

2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control

Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. [People] 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 also organized in a democratic manner.

3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their 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 their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

5th Principle: 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 co-operatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

6th Principle: Co-operation 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.

7th Principle: Concern for Community

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

The East End Food Co-op

Ends: Our Operating Principles

The East End Food Co-op's operating principles are summed up in our Ends Policy.

The East End Food Co-op exists to enhance physical and social health in our community.

To these ends, we will create:

1. A sustainable member-owned business open to everyone
2. An ethical and resilient food infrastructure
3. A vibrant, dynamic community of happy, healthy people
4. A creative vision to transform the future

A Brief History of the East End Food Co-op

The East End Food Co-operative was incorporated in 1980 after being founded in the late 1970s as part of another organization. In those days, natural foods were not common or readily available throughout the United States. The founders of the EEFC were determined to make natural foods available in Pittsburgh at a reasonable cost and established a co-operative organization to provide them as democratically as possible via an attractive store.

The Co-op was originally located in East Liberty, but soon moved to Garfield on Penn Avenue, where the Pittsburgh Glass Works now is. The Co-op federation's warehouse was in the same building. Eventually, the federation went bankrupt, and EEFC later moved to our current Meade Street location. At that time, "The Factory" still looked much like the Pennsylvania Electric Coil Company Factory. It took a lot of work and money, plus two expansions and a remodel of our space, to create our current store. Membership has grown steadily from 8,500 in 2010 to 11,500 in 2015 to over 17,000 at present.

Today, the EEFC has found its way to profitability and stability. We have an able and effective management team and skilled staff. Despite competition from Whole Foods, Giant Eagle, and Trader Joe's, the Co-op has continued to grow. In the near future, the EEFC will face decisions about expansion and clarifying priorities for the Co-op's future direction.

What is a Board & What Does it Do?

A Board of Directors is a governing body that is charged with monitoring and leading the vision of an organization. The EEFC's Board of Directors is bound by the Co-op's articles of incorporation and bylaws, and follows a system of policy governance for overseeing the Co-op.

About Our Board

The Board is elected by a vote of the Co-op's membership. The Co-op's Board consists of nine 3-year term members, two of whom can be representatives from the store staff. An additional, optional, 1-year term Board seat will be reserved for a staff member who will be elected only by the staff members. As outlined in the bylaws, an executive committee consists of a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Board also delegates work to committees on which Board members, and sometimes member-owners, serve.

The Board's Duties

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

Overseeing the General Manager

The Board is responsible for hiring, monitoring, evaluating the performance of, and, if necessary, removing the store's General Manager (GM). The Board evaluates the GM's performance and compliance with policy through monthly reports submitted to the Board by the GM.

Financial Oversight of the Co-op

The Board is responsible for approving certain financial documents and approving the Co-op's annual Budget. The Board also oversees an annual audit of the Co-op's finances.

Engagement With and Accountability to Our Member-Owners

The Board is elected by and accountable to the Co-op membership and acts based on the needs and desires of the member group as a whole. The Board must respond to members' interests when forging a direction for the Co-op.

Creating a Long-term Vision of the Co-op

The Board creates a long-term vision for the future of the Co-op. In doing so, it must empower the General Manager to uphold the Co-op's mission and vision and include the member-owners' input in the vision.

Policy Governance

Policy Governance is a governance model designed for Boards of Directors that provides a clear differentiation between governance and management responsibilities in organizations. The East End Food Co-op uses Policy Governance. Under this model, the Board of Directors does not decide how Operations should get work done. Instead, the Board focuses on defining the Co-op's Ends, vision, and operational oversight. The Board does this by establishing policies that clearly state the goals of the membership which elects them. These policies work based on limitations — they do not say which means can be used to fulfill these ends, but rather which cannot. The policies provide a way for the Board to examine the Co-op's activities. Through monthly and annual monitoring and reporting, the Board decides if the policies have been followed and if there has been sufficient progress toward our goals. The Policies are divided into four categories: Ends, Executive Limitations, Board/General Manager Relationship, and Board Process.

A copy of the Co-op's Policy Register is available online or upon request by emailing boardofdirectors@eastendfood.coop

Serving on the Board: Qualifications and Commitments

Service on the Board of Directors is challenging and rewarding. Even if you have never participated in governing an organization or heard of Robert's Rules of Order, you may have the qualities needed to become an excellent Director.

Qualities and Qualifications

A good candidate for the Board, in addition to being dedicated to the Co-op and its principles, the member-owners, and the ends, must possess the following:

- Excellent communication skills
- Ability and desire to work closely with other Board members as part of a cohesive team
- Vision for the future and an ability to see present-day decisions in the context of the long-term health of the Co-op
- The ability to speak openly and independently in group discussions, while also being able to abide by decisions arrived at collectively by the Board
- Good judgment, honesty, and courage
- Time to spend on committee work

A Director's Commitments

Though the month-to-month commitment varies, Directors should expect to spend between 10 and 30 hours a month on Board work. Currently, meetings are held in a hybrid format. The expectations of a Director include (but are not limited to):

Attendance and Participation at Board Meetings

The Board meets once a month, currently on the third Monday, for a regular meeting. Typically, the meetings are from 7:00 PM until about 9:30 PM. At the monthly meetings, the Board reviews reports submitted by the GM and monitors its own compliance with policies regarding Board operation. Additionally, the Board takes input from member-owners in open session, and discusses whatever additional topics may be on the agenda.

In addition to the monthly meeting, other meetings may be scheduled to ensure all Board work is completed in a timely manner. The Board also holds an annual training, typically a one-day retreat in January. Other full-board commitments include the Annual Meeting and other engagements as needed. Work on expansion is expected to be a primary focus.

Preparation for Meetings

Each month, a Director should expect to spend a few hours reviewing the reports submitted by Operations for completeness and compliance with policy. Directors also engage in self-monitoring, or rating the Board's compliance with policies governing the Board's operation. Directors are expected to prepare thoroughly.

Participation in Email and other Electronic Discussions

Often, there is not enough time during the monthly meetings to thoroughly discuss topics requiring full-board attention or approval. Directors are expected to participate thoughtfully and promptly in email and other electronic discussions as if they were full Board meetings.

Committee Service

Most Directors serve on at least one committee. Committees include the Executive Committee (officers), Board Perpetuation & Elections (BP&E), Member-Owner Participation (MOP), Finance, Labor & Team Relations, and Resilience. Other committees may be formed as needed. Committee duties should be approached just as commitments to the full Board, as committees are delegates of the full Board.

Adherence to the Code of Ethics

Directors are expected to adhere to the Code of Ethics at all times.

Perks and Benefits

As a Director, you can positively influence your Co-op, community, and city. New Directors receive training in co-operative structure and leadership, policy governance, and Board procedure. In addition to valuable experience, Directors receive a stipend of $125 per month, and those who are not staff members also receive a 10% discount on all store purchases.

Declaration of Candidacy

I, _____,
a member-owner of the East End Food Co-op, hereby declare myself a candidate for the EEFC Board of Directors. I certify that I am a member of the Co-op in good standing and that I do not have any overriding conflicts of interest that would prohibit me from serving on the Board.

I am aware of the following deadlines and requirements:

October 4

Deadline for receipt of candidacy materials (Declaration of Candidacy, current résumé, responses to "Questions for the Candidate," photo) to be submitted by email to boardofdirectors@eastendfood.coop or in hard-copy to the Customer Service desk. Candidates' responses will be presented in a candidate statement packet along with their photos. *Digital submissions are preferred!*

October 19

Voting begins. Ballots will be available at Customer Service and online.

November 29

Last day to vote.

I have attached the following

- ☐ current resume
- ☐ responses to "Questions for the Candidate" below
- ☐ photo

_____
Name (please print) Signature (type full name as digital signature)

_____
Address

_____ _____
Phone Email

Questions for the Candidate

Please take a moment to concisely answer the following questions. Total response (to all questions) should not exceed 250 words. Lengthy responses may be edited at will. Responses will appear in the candidate statement packet and on the EEFC website.

What is your experience as member, volunteer, or staff member of the EEFC?

What experiences have you had with other co-operatives or non-profit organizations?

What experience and skills (professional or business) or unique perspectives would you bring to the EEFC Board?

What do you think are some important one-year goals for the EEFC?

Describe your vision for the EEFC five years from now.

Why do you want to be on the Board?