



Position Announcement – General Manager

Central Co-op seeks a vibrant leader to serve as General Manager while developing and facilitating transition to a collaborative team management structure.

Central Co-op is a member-owned natural foods cooperative in the heart of Seattle dedicated to sustainable practices, community accountability, and the local food economy. As a consumer cooperative, we are "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" (International Cooperative Alliance).

We are proud to uphold the purposes for which we were formed:

- To work towards the community's providing itself with wholesome food and products that are produced and distributed in a manner respectful of the earth and its people
- To empower the community to educate itself
- To engage in the business of buying and selling goods and services as a retailer according to consumer cooperative and financially sound principles

We operate a single store, located in an urban neighborhood with increasing population and retail density, in the heart of a city with an increasing commitment to environmental sustainability and local food sovereignty.

We are approaching our 35th year of co-operation, with 12 years in our present location. We're situated in a multi-story mixed use building on a prominent corner, where we currently rent 11,500 sf of ground floor retail space, with an additional administrative office and a two-bedroom apartment that is used for office, meeting and community space.

We have shown continued growth in sales and improved profitability, despite the economic downturn, with \$17M in sales projected for 2011. We have emerged from a sometimes uncertain period following the move to our current location, and very recently made the final payment on a 12-year, \$3M debt. We have 11,000 owners and 120 workers, represented by 3 collective bargaining contracts.

We serve our community as both a retail cooperative grocer and a community institution working for social, environmental and economic justice throughout the food sector on behalf of, and in collaboration with, our member-owners and community partners. Our owner base has consistently supported decisions and practices that reflect our mandates to respect the earth and its inhabitants, and to operate using cooperative and financially sound principles.

We promote cooperation among cooperatives, locally and nationally, through active cross-sectoral collaborations that strengthen a just cooperative movement, and supporting other cooperative enterprises through our retail sales.

We are well poised to be able to meet the challenges that lay ahead and look forward to a creative collaboration with our next General Manager!

About the position

This position offers a unique opportunity for the right individual. The General Manager (GM) will provide visionary leadership and supportive direction in working with all department leads and direct reports to ensure effective day to day operations that support our purpose and long-term strategic goals - financial stability for current needs and future major capital investment; strong sales and service, with emphasis on local and sustainable products; effective systems and sustainable practices; worker development; and cooperative advancement. This position will be responsible for facilitating development of a complex \$17M budget that meets immediate and long-term goals. The next few years will be critical for the co-op to creatively manage our projected sales growth with limited space and aging equipment. The GM will use all available pertinent data and work with management and the Board of Trustees to maximize currently available resources while planning and implementing steps to carry us into the future. The GM will establish and oversee processes for advancing ecological sustainability throughout our operations during this time.

Additionally, Central Co-op has begun to transition our organization toward a more horizontal leadership structure. This has been a gradual and collaborative process which we look to continue in the coming years. We have established a Leadership Team with representation from all departments and have a self-directed team structure in place within two departments. The GM will work to support and strengthen self-directed teams, will work collaboratively to expand this structure within the co-op, and will work with the Leadership Team, senior management, workers and the Board of Trustees to define and establish a collaborative executive management structure that provides long term organizational strength and sustainability.

The GM provides inspirational leadership and sets the tone for the co-op as a whole, fostering a vibrant environment that is a pleasure to be in for workers, shoppers and the community at large. The GM provides consistent and accurate information, clear expectations, necessary support, and effective systems of accountability, thus ensuring that all workers are empowered to uphold our purpose, mission and values in every aspect of their work. The GM will endeavor to strengthen relationships throughout the co-op: among and between owners, committees, board, management and workers in all departments.

Our IDEAL candidate will have:

- A combination of business savvy and a passionate belief in the power of cooperative enterprise to achieve a net profit while working for sustainability and social, environmental and economic justice
- Demonstrated knowledge of the global impact of food systems on communities and ecosystems including an awareness of current issues such as: GMOs, organics, fair trade, food sovereignty, seed viability, climate change, greenwashing, etc;
- A commitment to strengthening our role in the cooperative movement, the organic and natural food movement, and in creating community food sovereignty

- Management experience in a community based, preferably co-op, retail grocery
- A track record of effectively managing a complex organization with integrity and accountability
- A desire to work with an engaged board, management team, worker body, and owner base
- Exceptional forward planning and time management skills, and an ability to lay the foundation necessary to easily retrieve relevant data and quickly respond as needed
- Experience coordinating and preparing a business plan, including operating, cash flow and capital budgets, for a large multi-stakeholder organization
- The ability to hold a comprehensive and strategic vision for the future and clearly see the current steps necessary to get there

- Exceptional communication and collaboration skills and an appreciation for disagreement and conflict as a rich source of insight for continued organizational growth and improvement
- An appreciation for collective bargaining and experience with negotiating labor contracts
- Experience working with effective alternative management structures that foster stability, collaboration and shared accountability based on a foundation of trust and respect.
- Leadership experience within an organization experiencing a major transition

Job Description

Position: General Manager

Tenure: Contract for 3-5 year period

Salary: DOQ

Reports To: Board of Trustees

Classification: Full-Time, Exempt

The General Manager is hired and supervised by a Board of Trustees, who are elected by our owners (members). While General Management includes primary responsibility for all aspects of Co-op function, the responsibilities of the GM may include, but are not limited to, the following specific duties in support of the Co-op's purpose, Strategic Plans and Board directives:

Leadership

- Support collaboration among all areas of the Co-op to fulfill our dual purpose as both a financially sound cooperative retail business and community food-based social, environmental, economic justice organization
- Identify and support operational practices to achieve Co-op's purpose; set clear expectations, support workplace success through appropriate training, support, development and supervision; and ensure accountability for practices that meet or exceed expectations
- Financial Management
- Coordinate preparation of the annual business plan, including: operating, capital, and cash budgets, marketing plan, and wage and benefit packages
- Report and analyze the financial performance of the Co-op; monitor deviations from the budget and take corrective action
- Obtain financing as directed by the Board, coordinate preparation of loan proposals, and negotiate with financial institutions for favorable terms

Daily Operations

- Ensure effective daily operation, including compliance with all applicable laws
- Ensure that personnel policies, procedures, and their implementation are cost-effective, equitable, legal, consistent, and forward the Purposes and Mission of Central Co-op
- Ensure effective contract negotiations and compliance with all collective bargaining agreements
- Ensure adequate maintenance and repair of the building and equipment and adequate insurance and security of building, equipment, and inventory to safeguard the Co-op's equity
- Set and track margin, sales, and customer service goals Co-op-wide
- Operate within principles of participatory management, including worker involvement

Community Outreach and Marketing

- Ensure that marketing strategy maintains emphasis on community-based, grassroots outreach in support of our purpose
- Ensure the development and maintenance of ongoing member and consumer education programs
- Ensure member and shopper opportunities for input on Co-op products, services and policies

Board of Trustees

- Serve as a non-voting ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees
- Monitor, and participate as needed in, standing and ad hoc committees of the Board
- Provide the Board with thorough and timely reports of operational matters to support effective Board governance
- Provide thorough and timely communication from the Board to Leadership and workers throughout the Co-op to support effective operations

Availability for some evening and weekend hours will be required.

ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS

- Demonstrated leadership ability
- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the co-operative principles as applied in a retail setting
- Management experience, ideally in a co-op, preferably in a retail grocery environment

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Demonstrated knowledge of the global impact of food systems on life: people, animals, ecosystems, earth, climate change. Aware of current issues including: GMOs, organics, fair trade, food sovereignty, protecting seed viability and greenwashing
- Experience with development, implementation and effective management of complex, multi-departmental budget or similar systems
- Experience with sales, budgeting, labor management, operational tracking and reporting metrics
- Experience negotiating collective bargaining agreements
- Experience leading an organizational management transition
- Experience with an alternative, collaborative management structure

Application Process

Submit a detailed resume along with a brief cover letter (no more than 2 pages) highlighting the knowledge, skills, experience and any additional qualifications that prepare you for management leadership of this complex, co-operative organization. Authorization to complete reference and background checks will be required prior to extending an offer.

Position will be open until filled. For guaranteed consideration, submit application materials to address below by December 5, 2011. We aim to make a selection by late January-early February 2012, allowing start date and transition with current Interim General Manager to occur during the second quarter of 2012.

Central Co-op
Attn: Kristina Kokonis, Board President
1600 E Madison
Seattle, WA 98122
email: board@centralcoop.coop Subject: General Manager

Central Co-op provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or military status in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws. The Co-op complies with applicable state and local laws governing non-discrimination in employment. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including, but not limited to, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation, and training.