

ADDRESS

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Lincoln, NE 68510

CONTACT

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2026

CANDIDATE

APPLICATION

PACKET



OPEN HARVEST
CO-OP GROCERY



Dear Prospective Board Candidate,

On behalf of the Open Harvest Co-op Grocery's Board of Directors, thank you for expressing an interest in becoming a board candidate. Open Harvest has been a part of the Lincoln community for over 50 years and continues to have a positive impact on the community's access to healthy, local, nutritious food. As opportunities and challenges continue to present themselves, the board is charged with directing and guiding the co-op's path into the future - an important role in our success.

The board requires committed, purposeful directors to contribute to this ongoing work. The responsibilities of directors fall into these three major categories:

1. Work with the general manager to consider opportunities and meet challenges.
2. Oversee the fiscal health of the co-op as we move to restore a positive financial position.
3. Continue our mission of excellent performance in meeting the evolving needs of our owners & community.

Specifically, the co-op is seeking board candidates who are:

- Dedicated to Open Harvest, its owners, and its mission and ends.
- Willing to learn policy governance, and participate in group decision making and group process in a cooperative, respectful manner
- Able to drive progress on both short and long-term goals and projects.

The application process requires that you attend one board meeting **August 4th, September 1st, or October 6th** and complete the following application along with answers to the brief questionnaire in this packet, by **September 30th**. Meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month via Teams from 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm. Please email your interest to the board (board@openharvest.coop) and a meeting link will be provided.

The slate of candidates will be approved at the **October 6th** board meeting. The election cycle will follow and conclude at the 2026 Annual Owner Meeting in early November.

Contact me at **board@openharvest.coop** if you are interested in this leadership role or have any questions regarding the board member responsibilities, application process, or upcoming election cycle.

Yours in cooperation,

Anna Hernoud

Board Chair

Open Harvest Board of Directors





OPEN HARVEST
CO-OP GROCERY

ABOUT OPEN HARVEST
CO-OP GROCERY

OUR HISTORY

We've been nourishing our community with local food since 1975. Open Harvest Co-op started as a buying club called the "People's Food Co-op" in 1971 in order to provide its members with hard to find products and bulk natural foods. The club opened as a small storefront on 27th and Randolph Street in 1975 and renamed the organization Open Harvest.

By the late 1980s, the co-op was bursting at the seams, and in 1990 the store moved to a much larger location on 16th & South Streets. In 2005, Open Harvest celebrated its 30th anniversary and was incorporated as a legal co-operative. Open Harvest completed an exciting expansion project in 2009, nearly doubling the square footage. In 2015, Open Harvest celebrated its 40th anniversary, commemorating a major milestone with the Storymobile project, recording over 14 hours of audio memories from dozens of volunteer storytellers and creating a 1-hour podcast that was broadcast on KZUM radio.

Open Harvest relocated to a 10,300 square foot facility on a high-traffic, high-visibility street in the Telegraph District (330 S. 21st Street) in February 2024. The new store is the result of years of planning, fundraising, and dedication to the vision of preserving Open Harvest's legacy. Our new store allows for better accessibility, improved equipment, and up to 40% more shelf space for products, all to support a better shopping experience and workplace for customers, owners, and staff. In 2025 Open Harvest celebrated its 50th anniversary.

COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

- 1. Voluntary and Open Membership:** We are a voluntary organization, 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:** We are a democratic organization controlled by our members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Members serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership.
- 3. Member Economic Participation:** Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. The economic benefits of a cooperative operation are returned to the members, reinvested in the co-op, or used to provide member services.
- 4. Autonomy and Independence:** Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.
- 5. Education Training and Information:** Cooperatives 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 about the nature and benefits of cooperation.
- 6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives:** Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.
- 7. Concern for Community:** While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.



OPEN HARVEST
CO-OP GROCERY

**ABOUT
OPEN HARVEST**

OUR ENDS

Our cooperative is guided by our global ends policy.

It describes the desired outcomes that result from the co-op's activities and gives purpose to the entire organization.

It creates a framework that provides the Open Harvest community with a tangible way to see the value that our co-op brings us.

Progress towards achievement of the Ends is necessarily incremental and forward-looking, as they are meant to be far-reaching, ideal states. With Ends, success is seen as a series of purposeful steps that are inevitably driven by long term plans.

GLOBAL ENDS POLICY

Open Harvest Cooperative Grocery exists so there will be a vibrant community that:

- Has access to healthy, organic, and local food
- Supports economic justice and strengthens the local economy
- Upholds inclusive, socially responsible practices
- Contributes to a strong local food system and a sustainable environment
- Embodies cooperative principles

POLICY GOVERNANCE

The Open Harvest Board uses policy governance, a board governance model that emphasizes long-range, strategic planning; enables accountable board leadership; and provides a process for monitoring and oversight of organizational performance.

This system keeps the board from getting involved in operational details; directors are not given a voice in the way the store operates, personnel decisions, product choices, or other similar issues. Instead, the board process ensures the success of the co-op by working together effectively, empowering and holding accountable the general manager (GM), providing strategic leadership, and perpetuating our democratic organization.

This governance structure requires the board to create policies that define the roles and responsibilities of the board and general manager, and the purpose, mission, and strategies of the organization. The task then becomes monitoring the performance of the board and GM relative to these policies, which is done thoroughly and throughout the year.





Thank you for your interest in running for the Open Harvest Board of Directors. Being a director is a rewarding experience and we look forward to learning more about you during the application process.

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Fiduciary Responsibility

Directors have a fiduciary responsibility to the owners to act in an informed and prudent manner, and they may be held personally liable if they do not. Directors have a duty to represent the owners at large and to act in their best interests. While serving on the Open Harvest Board, your primary interest must be to Open Harvest owners – not the interests of yourself or any other group, including: employees, unions, outside organizations, other food organizations, supermarkets, restaurants, etc.

Board Terms

Open Harvest has a nine-member board of directors. Each member serves a 3-year term. To create continuity, terms are staggered so that three members get newly elected every year.

Committee Work

Directors are expected to contribute to and serve on board committees as needed. Current committees include finance, election, annual meeting, and board operations (comprised of the board chair, vice chair and secretary).

Time Commitment

Monthly time commitment with meetings, communications, and reviewing board packets and other material is typically 5 - 10 hours per month. This may fluctuate with certain projects throughout the calendar year.

Compensation

For their committed service, directors receive an annual stipend, provided quarterly as store credit.

Board Chair: \$1,200

Board Officer or Committee Chair: \$720

Director: \$480

REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDATES

- Be a current Open Harvest owner in good standing
- Attend at least one board meeting by October 6th to see how the board conducts business and meet current directors.
- Attend the 2026 Annual Owner Meeting in the Fall (early November).
- Complete application for candidacy, sign the code of conduct agreement, and submit your application by end of day on September 30th, 2026.
- Please send completed application to Board Chair at **board@openharvest.coop** or drop it off with a cashier at the store.
- Communication for the nominations process is via email and it is your responsibility to regularly check your email during the nominations process.
- If accepted as a candidate, you may have your photo taken by co-op staff and be asked to participate in a short video interview, which will be made available to owners via Open Harvest's website, social media, at the store, and/or in e-newsletters.



REQUIREMENTS FOR ELECTED DIRECTORS

- A solid three-year commitment to the Open Harvest Board of Directors.
- Familiarity with, and adherence to, Open Harvest's bylaws and board policies.
- Preparation for and attendance at all monthly board meetings.
- An ability to actively and regularly participate via email, including transmittal of potentially large attachment documents.
- Active participation in the board's meetings, committee work, engagement events, training activities, and recruiting activities.
- Ability to understand financial statements (training required within first year).
- A genuine interest in cooperative issues and our community.
- A willingness to take responsibility for board duties and work together with understanding, mutual support, and respect to make decisions that will enhance the viability of Open Harvest.
- An ability and willingness to keep certain information and materials confidential.
- Perform board duties in good faith and with such care as an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would use under similar circumstances.
- Bring complete honesty and personal integrity to the board.
- Openly and impartially consider all issues and matters, researching issues and seeking additional expertise where needed.

Meeting Attendance

If elected, you must attend the following:

- Board orientation session – prior to first board meeting
- Monthly board meetings – starting December 1, 2026.
- Annual board retreat
- Annual owner meeting every year, typically in November.





POLICY TITLE: G5 - DIRECTORS' CODE OF CONDUCT

POLICY TYPE: BOARD PROCESS

ADOPTED: JULY 1, 2015, JUL, 2017 (REVISED)

REVISED: JULY 2, 2024

As Directors, we each commit ourselves to ethical, professional and lawful conduct.

G5.1. Every Director is responsible at all times for acting in good faith, in a manner which they reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the Cooperative, and with such care as an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would use under similar circumstances.

G5.2. Directors must demonstrate unconflicted loyalty to the interests of the Cooperative's Member-Owners. This accountability supersedes any conflicting loyalty such as that to advocacy or interest groups, membership on other Boards or staffs, and the personal interest of any Director acting as an individual consumer or Member-Owner.

G5.2.1. There will be no self-dealing or any conduct of private business or personal services between any Director and the Cooperative except as procedurally controlled to assure openness, competitive opportunity and equal access to "inside" information.

G5.2.2. Following the installation of newly elected Directors, all Directors must state for the record, to be recorded in the Board meeting minutes, whether they have any conflicts of interest. All Directors must report subsequent potential conflicts-of-interest to the Board as soon as the possibility of conflict develops.

G5.2.3. When the Board is to decide on an issue about which a Director has an unavoidable conflict of interest; that Director shall abstain from the discussion and the Board decision.

G5.2.4. A Director who applies for employment at the cooperative must first resign from the Board.

G5.3. Directors may not attempt to exercise individual authority over the Cooperative, GM and employees.

G5.4. When interacting with the public, the press, or other entities, Directors must recognize the same limitation and the inability of any Director to speak for the Board except to repeat explicitly stated Board decisions.

G5.5. Directors will respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature and must continue to honor confidentiality after leaving Board service.

G5.6. Directors will prepare for, attend, and participate fully in Board meetings and trainings.

G5.7. It is a fundamental duty for Board Directors to attend meetings, including monthly board meetings, the annual business meeting of the co-op, annual board retreat, and other special board meetings that may be scheduled.



G.5.7.1 Attendance is defined as attending the entire meeting from start to adjournment

G.5.7.2 If, in a twelve-month period, a Director misses three meetings where consensus is required, the Chair will notify the Director of the absences and give them the opportunity to either resign or to provide a case in writing for their continuation on the Board. This case needs to be provided to the entire Board at least one week before the next monthly BOD Meeting. If the Director chooses not to provide a case to stay on the Board, it will result in an automatic dismissal.

G.5.7.3 The Board will make a decision on the continuation of the Director's service in the BOD meeting following the third absence, in executive session.

G5.8. Directors will support the legitimacy and authority of the Board's decision on any matter, irrespective of the Director's personal position on the issue.

G5.9. Any Director who does not follow the Code of Conduct policy can be removed from the Board by a two-thirds majority vote of the remaining Board.

G5.10. Directors who resign from the Board must submit a formal letter of resignation to the Chair at least one week before their final Board meeting.

G5.11 Directors will not exhibit violent, oppressive, or racist behaviors or speech.

CONFLICT DISCLOSURE

I understand that I have a duty to disclose any additional actual or potential conflicts that may arise and to abide by board policy regarding participation in matters under consideration by the board.

DO YOU HAVE ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST?

☐

YES

☐

NO

IF YES, MY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARE LISTED BELOW:





OPEN HARVEST
CO-OP GROCERY

APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY

Please respond to each of the following questions so that the owner voters will know more about you and your interests in serving on the board. Your name and responses to the candidate questions will be printed in a special election guide, used on social media, and posted in the store.

Please email a photograph of yourself to be posted with your statement. Send to:
harvest@openharvest.coop

Voting takes place by owners during a two week period starting in October and ending at the annual owner meeting.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY:

ZIP CODE:

DAY PHONE:

EVENING PHONE:

EMAIL:

OWNER # (MUST BE IN GOOD STANDING):

Can you commit to serve a three-year term on the Open Harvest Board of Directors?

YES

NO

Do you have a sufficiently flexible schedule that you can consistently attend monthly board meetings?

YES

NO

Are you willing to attend bias/anti-racist training within the first three months?

YES

NO





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APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY

What is your relevant work or volunteer experience?

What diverse views, skills, and experiences would you add to the board?

Disclaimer:

Your full answers to all of the following questions may be placed on the Open Harvest website, in the e-newsletter, on the ballot, and in other places where board information is shared with the owners. By completing this application you are giving Open Harvest permission to use your answers publicly. Answers should not exceed 150 words.

What do you feel are the primary challenges and/or opportunities facing Open Harvest, and how could you help to meet such challenges/opportunities?

New Candidates: What is your motivation for running for board?

Incumbents: What do you believe has been your most important contribution to the board during your tenure?



OPEN HARVEST
CO-OP GROCERY

APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY

Please return your application by email to the election chair at:

board@openharvest.coop

or mail it to:

Open Harvest Election Chair
330 S. 21st Street, Suite 104
Lincoln, NE 68510

**Completed Applications are due
by September 30th.**

Application Checklist

Item To Be Completed	✓
Read Application	
Code of Conduct Agreement	
Contact Information	
Candidate Questionnaire	
Attend 1 Board Meeting	
Email Candidate Photo	
Agreement & Disclosure	
Application Submission	

Agreement & Disclosure

CANDIDATE CERTIFICATION

I have read and agree to abide by Open Harvest's Board Policy G.5 Code of Conduct and any subsequent changes the board makes to that policy:

YES

NO

I have completed the conflicts of interest disclosure section. I understand that I will have to disclose any conflicts of interest that should arise in the future:

☐

YES

☐

NO

I agree to Open Harvest's Media Release policy to allow my image and voice to be used in communication & marketing efforts:

YES

NO

My signature attests to the fact that all the information I provided in this application is accurate and complete.

SIGNATURE OF CANDIDATE:

DATE:
