



*2021-2024 Candidate Package*

Dear Prospective Board Member,

Thank you for your interest in serving on the Mississippi Market Board of Directors! The board determines the long-range vision for the co-op, provides financial oversight, and sets policies to guide the general manager in achieving our strategic priorities. Our board members are leaders, servants, stewards, and visionaries. This is a volunteer position with a small monthly stipend in the form of a store credit and a discount for all Mississippi Market locations. We welcome you to contact us at [board@msmarket.coop](mailto:board@msmarket.coop) or call 651-310-9475 with questions, or to be put in contact with a current board member to discuss this exciting opportunity.

If you submit an application, you will be committing to a three-year term. We ask that you carefully read the enclosed information before filling out the application.

In this packet, you will find:

- An overview of cooperatives
- A description of our business, goals, and values
- An overview of the board of directors' function, responsibilities, and eligibility requirements
- A summary of the election process and important dates
- The candidate application

In addition to the responsibilities and eligibility requirements described below, we have certain expectations of our board members that we urge you to consider and understand. Directors should expect to spend an average of 10-12 hours per month on board-related activities, some of which would be time spent at retreats and special events throughout the year.

Our expectations for board members include:

- Participate fully in board meetings. Attend all monthly meetings of the board (4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month) and one standing committee, as well as meetings of any other committees on which you may serve. Special projects may require more time commitment.
- Prepare in advance of every board meeting by reviewing the agenda, reading the packet, and compiling your feedback/questions.
- Attend the mandatory orientation for new board members.
- Actively participate in board discussion via e-mail or phone between meetings as necessary.
- Attend other events, such as annual member meetings and in-store meet and greet activities.
- Have access to a computer; internet; email.
- Check board email account regularly (at least 3x per week).

Please feel free to contact us with any questions that you may have.

We look forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,  
Board Recruitment and Development Committee

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: July 31, 2021**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **WHAT IS A CO-OP?**

A cooperative 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.

Fast facts:

- A co-op is a legal entity owned and democratically controlled by its members.
- Co-ops can be either nonprofit organizations or for-profits that operate as a form of social enterprise.
- Co-ops operate under a common set of ideals, originally developed in 1844 and adopted by the International Cooperative Alliance in 1937. These ideals (listed below) – seven cooperative principles and ten cooperative values – have been updated throughout the years.
- Every cooperatively formed business, whether grocery stores, utilities, housing, credit unions or other types of co-ops, all operate under this set of ideals.

**LOCAL CO-OP HISTORY:** The Credjafawn Co-op Store was located in St Paul's Rondo neighborhood near Mississippi Market's present-day Selby-Dale store. Credjafawn was one of five African American co-ops in the Twin Cities and part of the first wave of cooperative grocery stores. Sadly, Credjafawn closed in the mid-1950's followed by many local businesses when Interstate 94 was constructed through the heart of the Rondo neighborhood. Mississippi Market is proud to be a successor of Credjafawn Co-op in the Rondo neighborhood.

### **INTERNATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION**

#### **1. Voluntary and Open Membership**

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people 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**

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members—those who buy the goods or use the services of the cooperative—who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

#### **3. Member Economic Participation**

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. This benefits members in proportion to the business they conduct with the cooperative rather than on the capital invested.

#### **4. Autonomy and Independence**

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it is done so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintains the cooperative's autonomy.

#### **5. Education, Training and Information**

Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. Members also inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives.

#### **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 communities through policies and programs accepted by the members.

## COOPERATIVE VALUES

Basic cooperative values are general norms that board members, cooperative leaders and cooperative staff should share; the values should determine their way of thinking and acting.

- Self-help
- Self-responsibility
- Democracy
- Equality
- Equity
- Solidarity
- Honesty
- Openness
- Social responsibility
- Caring for others

## ABOUT US

### YOUR COOPERATIVE

Mississippi Market Co-op was started in 1979 by a community of people working towards a common goal – creating access to natural, organic, locally grown, fairly-traded, and sustainably produced products. A co-op is a result of what can happen when people pool their energy and resources together to achieve a common goal. Co-ops are voluntarily owned and controlled by community members. More than 18,000 people have invested in Mississippi Market Co-op by becoming [member-owners](#). In return, Mississippi Market employs more than 180 people, operates for the benefit of our member-owners, and is guided by the [articles and bylaws](#) they approve.

At Mississippi Market, we exist to serve our members – it's what sets us apart. We care deeply about our community, and each day we work together through the co-op model to help build a sustainable community of farmers, workers and shoppers, that benefits us all. Mississippi Market couldn't do this work without our member-owners and community members!

### ENDS: WHY WE EXIST

We are Mississippi Market, a food co-op that is open to everyone. We empower our diverse communities to:

- be healthy,
- make choices that sustain our planet, and
- create a more just local economy.

**Strategic Drivers** – In pursuit of our mission we will:

- 1) Deliver great customer service to everyone who comes through our doors.
- 2) Support and develop a dedicated and engaged staff.
- 3) Be a source of local, sustainable products and education about food-related issues.
- 4) Strengthen our local food system and our network of local farmers and producers.
- 5) Create a financially sound co-op that reinvests in its community.

## MISSISSIPPI MARKET'S VALUES: WHAT GUIDES US

**INTEGRITY:** We value honesty, openness and respect; we operate with transparency, consistency and courage as a trusted, expert advisor and are accountable to all our stakeholders for delivering quality in goods and services.

**PEOPLE:** We value, respect and recognize our diverse staff as they turn ideas into actions and goals into reality.

**MEMBER OWNERSHIP:** We come together as a cooperative business to use our economic power to meet the needs of our member-owners and affect positive change in our community and our local food economy.

**CUSTOMER COMMITMENT:** We will meet our customers' needs and exceed their expectations.

**LEADERSHIP:** We will be a trusted advisor improving customers' lives by creating, implementing and championing innovative and socially responsible ideas that lead the food industry.

**ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP:** We set a high standard for actively promoting and participating in environmentally sustainable business practices and projects.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS: FUNCTION & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Mississippi Market Board of Directors is a policy governance board that is legally responsible for the overall direction and performance of the co-op. The board carries out this responsibility by establishing broad policy guidelines and by monitoring the general manager within that framework. It is the general manager's function to implement the policies established by the board and carry out day-to-day operations.

### Eligibility Requirements

- Prospective candidates, if slated, **must be willing to become a member-owner** of Mississippi Market or **be a current member-owner** in good standing. You can find more information about becoming a member-owner on our website at [msmarket.coop/membership](https://msmarket.coop/membership).
  - Prior to running for election, each prospective candidate **must attend at least one regular board meeting**. Opportunities will be noted online in the Events section of the Mississippi Market website ([msmarket.coop/event](https://msmarket.coop/event)), and include the following dates:
    - **Board Meetings**, 6:30 p.m. at the Selby store\* on the following dates: 6/22/21, 7/27/21, and 8/24/21. Please register online to attend a board meeting or email the board at [board@msmarket.coop](mailto:board@msmarket.coop). Be ready to give a brief overview about yourself.
- \*Please note that due to current social distancing recommendations, board meetings are being held virtually until recommendations change. Please check the Mississippi Market website or contact us at the email listed above for the most up-to-date meeting information.
- **Candidate Information Sessions**, 6/22/21 and 7/27/21, 6:00 p.m. at Selby (or online if social distancing recommendations are still in place). If you know you want to apply, or want more information, come to the June or July board meeting at 6:00 p.m. and talk to current board members about being on the board. Please sign up at [www.msmarket.coop/event](https://www.msmarket.coop/event) for both the candidate session (6:00 p.m.) and the board meeting (6:30 p.m.).
  - Prospective candidates should be willing to learn about and commit to cooperative principles and serve the co-op's member-owners by fulfilling the responsibilities of the board of directors as stated below.

### Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

In general, members of a co-op board of directors have the same duties as the directors of any business. In addition, members of a co-op board of directors must act on behalf of our member-owners and balance business interests, along with member-owners' individual interests, when making decisions.

The Mississippi Market board of directors is a policy governance board; the board does not engage in operational decisions at the store level but is legally responsible for the overall direction and performance of the co-op.

### **Primary board responsibilities are:**

- Provide fiduciary oversight on behalf of Mississippi Market's member-owners.
- Hire, compensate, delegate responsibility to, and hold accountable a general manager.
- Have expectations in the form of written governing policies that realistically address the broadest levels of all organizational decisions and situations.
- Monitor operational performance by the general manager and board performance in the areas of board process and board-management relationship.
- Exercise due diligence in monitoring the co-op's financial condition.
- Perpetuate the board's leadership capacity using ongoing education, training and recruitment.
- Maintain confidentiality as required.
- Faithfully honor all legal obligations that come with directorship, which include the:
  - Duty of care (make informed decisions in good faith; act as a prudent person; use a good process for decision making; be honest; ensure adequate record keeping).
  - Duty of loyalty (always act in the best interest of the cooperative; disclose and avoid conflicts of interest; engage in no self-dealing; maintain confidentiality).
  - Duty of Attention/Diligence (attend meetings; participate in discussions; be prepared; review materials; ask questions; know and adhere to state laws and co-op bylaws; support Board decisions and policies; honor contracts; ensure payment of all tax obligations).

### **Board Election Process Overview**

You may submit your application online or in-store. Please note that **a resume or summary of experience is required along with your application**, and that it is in your best interest for this resume or summary of experience to address one or more of the current recruitment priorities (outlined below). Throughout the application and election process, correspondence will primarily take place via email; the Board Recruitment and Development Committee requires you to have access to a personal email account. You will receive an email confirmation once the Board Recruitment and Development Committee receives your application. This confirmation serves as record that we received your application, and it will detail next steps as well as discussing eligibility requirements. You can expect an emailed confirmation that we received your application within one week of submitting it. **If you do not receive a confirmation within one week of submitting your application, please email [board@msmarket.coop](mailto:board@msmarket.coop).**

If you are slated and become one of the final candidates on the ballot, we will need a current headshot for our marketing and voting materials. **All applicants will be required to come to one of our three store locations to have a headshot taken by our Marketing department.** Our Marketing department will be available to schedule appointments from 08/9/21 through 8/13/21, at any of our store locations. If you are not able to come to a store during those times, you will need to make alternate plans with the Marketing department. **If you have questions about this or know you will not be able to schedule an appointment between 08/9/21 and 08/13/21, please email us at [board@msmarket.coop](mailto:board@msmarket.coop).**

Mississippi Market Co-op's board of directors seeks to fill up to four open seats for the 2021-2024 election term. The members of the Board Recruitment and Development Committee (BR&D) will review all applications received by the July 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. The BR&D Committee uses a slating matrix to perform the initial screening of candidates' skills and strengths.

Slating allows the BR&D Committee to seek out the top candidates based on current board priorities. In your board candidate application, you should expand on at least one of the following areas where you feel you might add particular value to the board: **Board Governance, Community Engagement/Connections, Diversity and Inclusivity, Food Justice, Local Food Systems, and Long Term and Strategic Planning.** The BR&D Committee will aim to slate at least two candidates for every open seat.

The Board Recruitment and Development Committee will present the slate of candidates to the full board of directors for approval. Once the slate is approved, the BR&D Committee will contact all applicants to notify them of whether they were chosen for the slate or not. **Applicants who are chosen to be slated need to apply for co-op membership if not**

**already a member; please note, Mississippi Market offers payment plan options and a limited income membership entry (LIME) program. If you have questions about becoming a member, please contact us at us at [board@msmarket.coop](mailto:board@msmarket.coop).**

A printed member newsletter announcing slated board candidates, voting procedures and election timelines will be emailed to member-owners around the same time that the voting period opens. An email containing a board election voting link to digital copies of this information will be emailed to all co-op member-owners. If chosen for the final slate, some of your responses to the candidate application may appear in the election issue of the Mississippi Market member newsletter. All of your answers will be included on the co-op's website and on the digital election voting website. All applicants chosen for the final slate are highly encouraged to attend Mississippi Market's Annual Meeting on 10/20/21. Newly elected board directors are announced and welcomed at the annual meeting.

If you have any questions as you proceed through the application process, please contact us via email: [board@msmarket.coop](mailto:board@msmarket.coop), or phone: 651-310-9475.

### **2021 Board Election Timeline**

- **7/31/21 – Application deadline**
- 08/09/21-8/13/21 – Meet with our Marketing department to have your headshot taken in-store (for use on website and in printed materials)
- 8/24/21 – Slate approved by full board
- 8/31/21 – Slated candidates announced to applicants
- 9/30/21-10/18/21 – Voting period
- 10/20/21 – Annual Meeting: New directors announced (**Attendance highly encouraged** but not required)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPLICATION, 2021-2024

*Note: Some of your responses to the questions below could appear in the election issue of the Mississippi Market member newsletter, in an email to member-owners, and on our website. These responses will be the primary basis by which voters will evaluate candidates for election to the board of directors. Due to space limitations, your character count is limited for each question. In the newsletter, candidates' responses may be edited further. Full responses will be available on our website.*

Applications are available for download online at [msmarket.coop](https://msmarket.coop).

The Board Recruitment and Development Committee would like to gather some basic information about your skills, expertise and background. We invite you to share what you believe you can offer Mississippi Market Natural Foods Co-op, and what interests you about serving on the Board.

In addition to completing this application, **you must attach a resume or summary of experiences with your completed application.** If submitting your application online, please email your additional documents to [board@msmarket.coop](mailto:board@msmarket.coop).

Name

Address

Member Number (optional)

Phone

Email

1. Can you commit to meeting the term and expected workload required by this role? (3- character limit)
2. Why are you interested in running for this board? (750-character limit)
  
3. Briefly summarize what professional, leadership, and/or volunteer experience uniquely qualifies you to serve on the Board. (750-character limit)





8. The co-op is currently facing many new challenges due to an increasingly competitive grocery industry. What opportunities do you see for innovation and growth for the co-op to overcome these and other challenges? (750-character limit)

9. Tell us about your favorite co-op food, and how you like to enjoy or share it. (300-character limit)

10. Which Mississippi Market store location do you shop at most often? (300-character limit)

**Please submit your completed application along with your resume or a summary of experiences to [board@msmarket.coop](mailto:board@msmarket.coop).**

Printed applications may be turned in to the staff at any of our customer service desks. **The application deadline is 07/31/2021. You will receive an email confirmation within one week of submitting your application. If you do not receive a confirmation of application submission, this could mean we did not receive your application. If you do not receive a confirmation, email us at [board@msmarket.coop](mailto:board@msmarket.coop) or call 651-310-9475.**