

2023 BOARD CANDIDATES



ABOUT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

What is a board & what does it do?

A Board of Directors is a governing body 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 Co-op's Board consists of nine members, two of whom can be a representative from the staff, as well as an optional tenth one-year term seat that is filled by a staff member and voted on only by other staff members. The Board is elected by a vote of the Co-op's membership. As outlined in the bylaws, there is an executive committee consisting of a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Board also delegates work to committees.

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- Financial oversight of the Co-op
- Engagement with and accountability to our Member-Owners
- Strategic planning and visioning
- Overseeing the General Manager

**VOTING IS OPEN ONLINE & IN STORE FROM
OCTOBER 22ND - DECEMBER 3RD**





Nicholas Leise

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

I have been a loving member of the EEFC for just over two years now. I am a routine customer and passionate supporter.

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

During my time as a Penn State student, I spent three years involved with THON, a student-run philanthropy organization raising millions of dollars for the fight against childhood cancer. I was the inspiration leader for a team of 30+ people every year...

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

With a degree in mechanical engineering, I spend my business hours as a Project Manager for Industrial Construction and Operations. I have experience with facility expansions, new constructions, multimillion dollar budgets and work cross-functionally with teams such as Finance, Real Estate, Design Engineering, and construction vendors. Additionally, I am the owner of a local, small Landscaping Company in the City of Pittsburgh. In my spare time, I am passionate about how good food can grow people and communities.

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

I want to see the Co-Op grow as a household name. I want to bring in farmer's and vendors to the store to interact with members and customers. I want to bring the EEFC's mission to schools for kids to learn the value of healthy food.

Describe your vision for the EEFC five years from now.

Simply put, in five years, I want the EEFC's store(s) to be visited more than the local Giant Eagle or Whole Foods.

Why do you want to be on the Board?

I will bring a young, passionate energy to the EEFC with a focus on expansion and growth. I am an Engineer and Foodie. I want to spread my love for food and community.



Nico Demkin

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

My wife and I moved to the Pittsburgh area in 2022, and quickly discovered EEFC. We relatively recently joined the EEFC, but want to become more involved, as we prefer it over our last Co-Op. After shopping for a few months,

we became members due to the quality of the products and community engagement.

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

For 8 years I was a member of the Swarthmore Co-op, until I moved to Allegheny County. I am also a founder and board member of the non-profit Shikkaricon, and currently serve as its treasurer. We hold events in the Philadelphia area focused on providing space for youth to enjoy Japanese and pop cultural entertainment.

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

I have excellent administrative, HR, communicative, and overall professional skills. I also have uniquely individual and business ethics as a Jew (convert in process), and active in my synagogue, Temple Emanuel, vegan (over 5 years), LGBTQ+ person, and environmentalist. I want to use my learned skills and outlook to help advance EEFC's objectives.

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

Focusing on Providing new products, establishing new partnerships/relationships, and focusing on growth, In addition, I want to focus on consumer feedback and member feed, particularly in a post-pandemic world.

Describe your vision for the EEFC five years from now.

I want to see increased community involvement, growth, and expansion. I believe now that the pandemic has officially ended, opportunities that may have been previously put on hold or were inaccessible should be focal points in the coming years. However, growth ought not to come at the expense of quality, customer service, or the values of the members.

Why do you want to be on the Board?

I love the EEFC from a customer standpoint, and wanted to be more involved in my prior co-op, but never had the opportunity. I also want to make a difference to my new home and community. I love the store, and believe it has further potential, and want to do my part.



Tyleda Worou

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

As a member of the EEFC since 2017 I have enjoyed the fresh produce, the bulk section, and the café which helps to give the Co-op its eccentric vibe. I am excited for its return January 2024.

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

Other than obtaining a EEFC board seat March of 2023 I have never had the opportunity to work with a non-profit or co-operative before.

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

I have been a small business owner on the east side of Pittsburgh for the past six years happily servicing Allegheny County and neighboring counties. I pride myself on providing accurate professional timely services. I would bring fresh ideas a positive attitude and a willingness to work with others to the EEFC board.

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

Securing our new location is extremely vital however management and worker owner cohesiveness while continuing to provide or member owners and community with some of the best products and services.

Describe your vision for the EEFC five years from now.

I hope to see the EEFC thriving in its new location, offering new products and services. While offering fresh local products continuing to add value to the community we are in.

Why do you want to be on the Board?

I would like to continue working on the current projects that “we” the current BOD have been assisting and working with management on. I believe that having a few current board members remain on the board is important for works that are currently in progress.



Mark Bowers

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

I have been a member of the coop since 1998, and a member of the expansion committee in 2023. As a member-owner, I’ve attended many EEFC board meetings in 2023.

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

I’ve been a board member/volunteer with local community development corporation, Downtown West Newton, Inc. since 2004, and a past board member and active volunteer with Westmoreland Land Trust since 2008. Served on steering committee that founded this county-wide land conservation organization. I was a stewardship committee member for three years for the Allegheny Land Trust and I’m currently a volunteer.

I’m an active member of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania since 1981. Served as treasurer since 2012. And I’m a past board member of the MonValley Initiative and currently on Regional Development Committee. MVI provides housing counseling, real estate/ community/workforce development and financial coaching to the people of the Mon Valley.

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

I worked as a team member of several geotechnical engineering consulting companies providing professional services to government agencies, residential and commercial development companies as well as individual home owners for 40 years. Interacted and developed relationships with clients. Worked as a project manager doing cost estimating, proposal preparation, report preparation, and invoicing for many projects.

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

Finalizing the search for a new EEFC store location, maintaining adequate staffing for providing services and products to the customers of the EEFC, and re-opening the hot food and smoothie bars which have been an important part of the EEFC and community for decades.

Describe your vision for the EEFC five years from now.

My vision includes EEFC operating at a new facility with expanded services and satellite facilities to better serve the community, with adequate staffing to provide for operations.

Why do you want to be on the board?

To assist the board as a team member to help the EEFC grow and continue to be an important part of the local community.

Lucia Covato

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

I have grown-up with the EEFC and it continues to be my go-to local grocery store. During a health struggle I relied upon the EEFC for clean, quality food and supplements to support my healing.



As a member, I am reassured that I can conveniently support local farmers and vendors.

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

I am currently a General Dentist and the Chief Dental Officer at North Side Christian Health Center, a 501 c3 Federally Qualified Health Center in the North Side. I serve on their Quality Committee and Risk

Management team. I am a longstanding member of the REI Co-op.

What experience and skills or unique perspectives would you bring to the EEFC Board?

I have experience in budgetary and personnel management, regulatory compliance, risk management, policy development, quality improvement, and customer service. As a healthcare provider for the underserved, I realize that food equity is intimately tied to health equity.

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

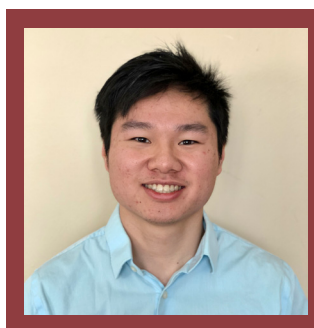
Identify a sustainable, convenient, new location for the EEFC. Develop a robust transition plan to minimize interruption in operations. Continue to seek guidance and support from Co-op members and community partners as it plans these changes.

Describe your vision for the EEFC five years from now.

EEFC will continue to be an integral community partner in providing equitable opportunity for all people to reap the vital benefits of healthy foods. It will bolster its brand by offering more locally sourced products than corporate competitors, and will remain sustainable by growing membership in its new neighborhood.

Why do you want to be on the Board?

I would like to support the EEFC beyond membership, and give back for the many ways it has supported me. I want to offer my skills and experiences to contribute a perspective within the EEFC community that is rooted in health for the individual and community.



Desmond Zheng

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

The EEFC has been my go-to grocery store in Pittsburgh since my undergraduate years at Pitt, and I have been a member since moving back to the area in 2022.

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

profit organizations?

My mom transferred her love of co-ops to me, and we’ve been shopping at our local co-op since 2003. On our cross-country road trip last year, we stopped at co-ops in Sioux Falls, Rapid City, and Bozeman.

Outside of co-ops, I am currently a Teaching Artist for the Pittsburgh Center for Creative Reuse.

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

As a sustainability consultant and young professional, I hope

to bring to the EEFC Board my experience helping organizations transition to become a more sustainable operation while maintaining growth, and provide my input and perspective on intersectionality, inter-generational collaboration, and sustainability.

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

I think identifying a larger, yet green, location for the EEFC should be a priority in the next year. Other one-year goals would be clean energy procurement, increase of community programs, and supplier engagement.

Describe your vision for the EEFC five years from now.

I see the EEFC as not only continuing to provide high quality, healthy grocery options to the Pittsburgh community, but also serving as a third space for community gatherings and workshops, as well as community solar installations to combat local energy poverty.

Why do you want to be on the Board?

I want to be on the Board to help make an impact and enact sustainable actions in the co-op, and hopefully affect long-lasting positive change in my community.



Carlos Gasca Yanez

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

As a member I enjoy the fact that our purchases contribute to a resilient local food system and organic food production. I found being a board member is a big responsibility, but I am happy to contribute and ensure our 40-year

legacy of supporting healthy food access in our city.

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

I participated in founding a cohousing community in Calgary Alberta, which is incorporated as a cooperative. I also helped organize a multi-stakeholder cooperative that does organic grocery delivery in Canada. Most recently I was a food pantry coordinator for a local nonprofit during COVID-19 and successfully shared over 180,000 lbs of food a year.

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

I bring my passion for ensuring a healthy ecology on our Earth. I am social entrepreneur and artist, I start businesses that contribute to the "We" that keep us healthy. I can share my skills in community and business development.

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

At the moment we need to resolve our location issue. We also need to consider our business model and ensure we remain competitive in the local grocery environment. Increasing member engagement will also be necessary as we will likely need to ask our members to contribute towards a capital campaign.

Describe your vision for the EEFC five years from now.

Our food Co-op and its members successfully support a sustainable locally owned food system by leveraging our assets and 40-year history.

Why do you want to be on the Board?

To ensure the health of our Co-op so we can contribute towards establishing a sustainable locally owned food system in our city.

HOW TO VOTE

MEMBERS CAN VOTE ONLINE AT VOTING.EASTENDFOOD.COOP

- Click on the "Ballot" tab at the top of the page.
- You will be required to log in to vote.
- Your login is your Member Number. You can find your Member Number on the back of your Member Card. Remove the leading 4 and zeros as well as the last digit. Example: 4 00000 16989 7 = 16989
- Your password is your last name + your 5 digit zip code. Names are all lowercase with no hyphens, spaces, or special characters. Examples: Joe Smith, Jr = smith12345, Jane O'Rochester = orochester12345, John Weaver-Cooperator = weavercooperator12345
- Once you log in, you will be prompted to provide an email address.
- After submitting your email address, you will receive a voting notification email with a link directly to the ballot. The link is good for 24 hours, after that you'll need to login again.
- You may select up to 5 candidates; please be sure not to select more than 5.

MEMBERS CAN VOTE IN PERSON AT THE CUSTOMER SERVICE DESK

- The primary member should present a photo ID at Customer Service.
- Customer service will look up your membership in the database and print you a ballot with your name and member number already printed on it.
- Place your ballot in the box located at the Customer Service desk.

A FEW THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- We can only accept one ballot per membership number.
- If a household has a membership, only one vote is allowed from that household.
- If there are multiple votes from one membership number, ALL will be disqualified.
- Do not allow anyone else to fill in your ballot or deposit it in the ballot box for you.
- Proxy voting is not allowed per the East End Food Co-op Bylaws and Policies.