



Information for TPSS Co-op member-owners contemplating a run for the Board:

You think you might want to run for the TPSS Board of Representatives? Great!

Being on the Board of Representatives of TPSS Co-op provides an amazing opportunity to build and strengthen one of Takoma Park and Silver Spring's leading community institutions, the TPSS Co-op. TPSS Co-op has over \$10 million in annual sales. As you are building a community institution, you will also learn a lot about the business world.

To be eligible to run for the Board, you must be a member-owner of TPSS Co-op.

What are the goals of the Co-op?

The TPSS "ends statements" state the purpose of our Cooperative. TPSS Co-op's goals are currently as follows:

1. TPSS Co-op will be a sustainable cooperative enterprise that benefits the community at large - consistent with community needs, financial viability, cooperative principles, healthful living, and strong environmental stewardship.
2. Co-op members are involved in and knowledgeable about the meaning, benefits and responsibilities of cooperative ownership.
3. Co-op customers have access to goods produced in socially and environmentally responsible ways, with an emphasis on local and organic foods, at reasonable prices and in welcoming community marketplace settings.
4. Customers are knowledgeable about food and food-related issues and can make informed choices about healthful living.
5. TPSS Co-op is committed to being inclusive and accessible to the whole community. The Co-op will build strong linkages through its outreach programs with surrounding communities and nearby farmers and businesses.
6. The TPSS Co-op staff has an empowering and positive workplace.

As part of an international cooperative movement of one billion member-owners,¹ TPSS Co-op subscribes to the internationally-recognized values of *self-help*, *self-responsibility*, *democracy*, *equality*, *equity* and *solidarity*. In addition, cooperatives throughout the world agree to put into practice these values by implementing the seven following principles:

- **Voluntary and Open Membership**
- **Democratic Member Control**
- **Member Economic Participation**
- **Autonomy and Independence of Cooperatives**
- **Education, Training and Information about Cooperatives**
- **Co-operation among Cooperatives**
- **Concern for Community**

¹ <https://ica.coop/en/whats-co-op/co-operative-facts-figures>

Frequently asked questions:

Is experience necessary to serve on the TPSS Board of Representatives?

Experience is not required. However, if you have worked in or with cooperatives, or have served on any committees at TPSS Co-op, you are strongly encouraged to consider running for election to the Board.

Additionally, if you have relevant skills to offer TPSS Co-op, you are strongly encouraged to run for the Board. For instance, experience with finances or accounting is very helpful on the Audit and Finance Committee. Experience with marketing and outreach is very helpful on the Membership and Community Affairs Committee. Experience with law or project development is helpful on the Policy Committee, and with governance. While skills and experience are valued, what counts most is your interest in TPSS Co-op, your good sense, and your willingness to dedicate your time and energy to build a stronger Co-op.

What is the time commitment?

Our Board typically meets once a month on the evening of the third Sunday of the month. These meetings are usually between two to three hours long. The Board usually also schedules at least one 8-hour annual retreat plus two membership meetings per year. Additionally, Board Representatives are expected to serve on Committees as needed and, minimally *must* serve on one Committee.

The Bylaws mandate the formation of three standing committees: Audit and Finance, Membership and Community Affairs, and Nominations. The Board may create additional committees as needed.

The amount of time spent per week varies quite a bit, depending on the work the Board agrees to do and your own time availability. That said, given the need to review documents and e-mail between meetings, prepare for meetings, be present in public to represent the Co-op, etc., a Board member should be willing to dedicate an average of two hours a week and up to 20 hours a month of service. In accordance with TPSS Bylaws, Board Representatives receive for their service of \$75 a month in the form of a TPSS gift card (Board officers receive \$100 a month and the Board President receives \$125 a month). These amounts are taxable.

Are there any legal requirements to be aware of?

Board Representatives have the responsibility to keep informed, to think prudently, and to act for what they believe are the best interests of the Co-op by hiring and evaluating the general manager and setting policy for the Co-op. When Board Representatives make mistakes, they can't be held liable for losses resulting from errors of judgment. They are not insurers of Co-op success. Board Representatives may be held liable if they are negligent, dishonest, or disloyal. Negligence means failing to make sure that prudent business practices are followed, that regular relevant reports are made, and that records are kept and audited. Disloyalty includes using a Board Representative's position to gain special advantages, or anything done knowing that it works against the best interest of the Co-op as a whole. The Co-op maintains indemnification insurance, and Board Representatives are covered by it.