

Description of Membership

Purchasing membership into the Suncoast Co-op is placing equity into a community owned business that you will have democratic control over you are not just a member, you are a owner. Membership is Ownership. The equity that our members give to the co-op is used to expand the business, add more products, and increase the availability of local food from our Suncoast area. We have a re-occurring yearly membership of \$25 which will give you the following benefits:

- 10% Discount on all items
- Co-op Dividends – Patronize from the market and reap the rewards years to come with a vibrant local food economy.
- Membership is Ownership- your \$25 is equity into a business for capital to expand. You own the business
- Democratic election of board of directors- Each member gets one vote. We will have a board that manages the market every member gets one vote at elections for board members. Our initial steering board will continue operating the market until April when we will have an election.
- 1/2 half off on any upcoming workshops or events our co-op may host.
- Preferred Patron- If there are 5 apples on the market and 6 are sold, members get preference first on their order being fulfilled.
- Local investment opportunities- Your become aware first about opportunities to invest into your local economy via community owned businesses we together create and own.
- Hiring Opportunity- we are worker owned cooperative we only hire from within. “With us, for us, we hire ourselves”

Membership Rules and Expectations

- a. comply with all terms and conditions of the Bylaws**
- b. update membership information in Company records;**
- c. support the Cooperative by doing business with it; Pledge to shift 10% of your food budget local**
- d. promote the Co-op to others; purchase from the co-op**
- e. keep informed;**
- f. participate in Co-op activities;**
- g. attend meetings;**
- h. vote and participate in decision-making process; and**
- i. provide needed capital or other means of support when feasible and necessary to operate, build and sustain the Co-op.**

The 4 W's

Work: We need members who are willing to put in the hours, attend meetings, participate in events, etc.

Wisdom: We need members who bring mature judgment to complex matters, who are wise enough to share the right information and as, required, make the right decisions (often on the spot).

Wallop :We need members who have clout, power, and leverage; who have influence within their own sphere and among our community – people who can open doors, attract others to the cause, and serve as ambassadors.

Wealth: We need members who are willing to make and solicit big gifts and loans – those who will stretch and will make the Co-op a focus of their philanthropy. This is critical only as we get our Co-op up and running and becomes less important as we are successful.

Organizational Structure

Current Board of Directors:

Barbara Sullo
Rick Blouin
Audrey Voss
Eric Stewart
Joey Stevens
Donna Gill

Committee

We have several committee's that our membership can participate with in order to increase the capacity of our cooperative.

Growers Committee

Responsible to establish liaison with the Growers and coordinate with them to increase production of locally grown and produced food and products for the market.

- Able to generate and implement ideas with growers to bring more products onto the market
- Coordinate with growers for helping with production
- Organize volunteer activities such as Permablitz
- Organize workshops to teach new growers and cottage industry for more products on the market.

Marketing Committee

Responsible to establish the Suncoast Co-op brand and identity and develop the communications and educational materials to support that. Members of this committee should have one or more of the following skills (in abundance):

- Able to generate and implement ideas which bring people to our table with energy and enthusiasm
- Able to write press releases and marketing material which does the same
- Ability to develop collaborative communications and partner with other non-profit and educational organizations as required

Fundraising Committee

Responsible for creating and implementing the programs and events to raise capital for the co-op. Members of this committee should have one or more of the following skills (in abundance):

- Event management and organizational skills to pull together many elements of the puzzle
- Willingness to collaborate with marketing
- Creative fund-raising skills
- Researching and writing of Grants and proposals
- Ability to communicate to the general public
- Time and enthusiasm – to go door to door and hand out materials... to sit at informational venues and solicit membership – to assist with town hall or other gatherings – to ask permission to post materials – to staff fund-raising events

Membership Committee

Responsible for working with existing Membership to “rally the troops” to become the volunteer “hands” required to implement the marketing plan, fundraising strategies, dissemination of educational materials and other volunteer opportunities. Members of this committee should have one or more of the following skills:

- Enthusiasm
- Organizational Skills
- Time and enthusiasm – to go door to door and hand out materials, to sit at informational venues and solicit membership – to assist with town hall or other gatherings – to ask permission to post materials – to staff fund-raising events
- Willingness to become knowledgeable about our Co-op and its impact on our community

Operations Planning Committee

Responsible for planning and implementing the detailed operational elements of the co-op. This broad and critical committee requires varied skill sets, including:

- Retail experience – grocery experience would be very helpful
- Understands inventory, purchasing, daily operations, etc.
- Understands customer interaction and customer needs
- Management of the ongoing operations of a business to ensure continuing improvement
- Knowledge of local farming community
- Legal understanding of co-op laws and regulations in Florida (or ability to get that and implement it)
- Knowledge of and ability to ensure Compliance of appropriate government regulations relating to the store

Finance Committee

Responsible for establishing and maintaining financial controls and for managing the finances for the co-op under the direction of the Treasurer. Skills include:

- Knowledge of basic bookkeeping/cash-flow/ banking
- Ability to research existing co-op systems and make appropriate recommendations
- Ability to help define our financial systems within the structure of the proposed by-laws

Information Technology Committee

Responsible for the ongoing maintenance and development of our website and internal and external communication via IT. Please note that we currently have these skills, but are interested in identifying additional individuals to support our IT volunteers.

- Software and web design
- Social networking