



## Memorandum

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To: NASCO Individual Members  
From: Rek Kwawer, Director of Operations  
Date: September 4, 2015  
Re: **NASCO Board nominations**

NASCO is excited to announce the beginning of the nomination process for seats on our Board of Directors. Elections are conducted annually by the NASCO Board of Directors for four of its 12 three-year seats. In 2015-2016, the Board is filling one additional seat one-year seat, for a total of five new directors. These directors will begin their terms at the February 2016 board meeting.

As a NASCO Individual Member, you have the opportunity to nominate someone to fill one of the open seats on the Board of Directors. Enclosed in this mailing are an announcement about the elections, Frequently Asked Questions about the board and the election process, a nomination form, a candidate statement (which each candidate must fill out), and a complete board member job description and responsibilities.

The following is the process for nominating someone to run for the NASCO Board:

- Select a candidate and nominate them (as an Individual Member, you may nominate a candidate with four other Individual Members – if you have questions about who the other Individual Members of NASCO are, please contact [rek@nasco.coop](mailto:rek@nasco.coop)).
- You send the completed Nomination Form to NASCO by **November 6, 2015**.
- The nominee sends the completed Candidate Statement to NASCO by **November 6, 2015**.
- The rest of the process will be in accordance with the enclosed timeline.

If you have any questions, please contact Rek Kwawer at [rek@nasco.coop](mailto:rek@nasco.coop) or 734-678-1821.

The NASCO Board of Directors has primary responsibility for setting the organization's policies and directions while acting as trustee of the entire organization. As such, Board members do not represent individual co-ops. By nominating a candidate for the Board your co-op helps to set the direction of the larger NASCO community - we need a strong Board to keep NASCO responsive to the needs of the cooperative movement.

Sincerely,

Rek Kwawer  
Director of Operations  
North American Students of Cooperation



## **Job Description: NASCO Board Member**

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### *Selection Process & composition:*

Generally, four board members are elected in the spring each year according to the NASCO Election Procedures. Twelve of the board members are elected for three-year terms on a staggered basis.

The board also includes an Active Member Representative, elected by the Active Members at the NASCO Institute each year, one director selected by the NASCO Properties Board, one appointed representative from the People of Color Caucus, and two appointed caucus chairs: one chosen by the Diversity Congress at Institute and one chosen by a caucus selected by the Board, based upon the changing needs and composition of the Board of Directors. The Diversity Congress and the People of Color Caucus have staggered two-year terms.

Our board of directors is comprised of NASCO members, NASCO alumni, members of non-NASCO housing and worker cooperatives, and people who are no longer living in cooperatives but are still active in the cooperative movement.

*Term:* One year for the Active Member Representative, two years for People of Color Caucus chair and Diversity Congress chair, one year for the other caucus appointee, and three years for other board members. In the event that a director does not finish their term, a candidate serving for the remainder of the departing director's term will replace them.

*Accountable to:* The Membership of NASCO.

### **GENERAL ACCOUNTABILITY:**

A director of the NASCO Board has four general responsibilities:

1. Planning and Stewardship: Individually and collectively, Directors on the NASCO Board develop with staff and members NASCO long and mid-range plans. This process includes development, approval and periodic review of NASCO's business plans, budgets, and annual and semi-annual objectives.
2. Guidance and Oversight: Individually and collectively, NASCO Directors provide continuous evaluation and feedback on NASCO's programs and services. NASCO Directors are responsible for evaluating staff performance, providing feedback on staff proposals for services and program changes, and initiating proposal on NASCO's services, programs and organization.
3. Program Support and Representation: Directors on NASCO Board from time to time will be requested to supplement NASCO staff in providing services to members and in representing NASCO to members and the broader cooperative communities of Canada and the United States.
4. Financial Assistance: Directors will seek to contribute their time and energy to projects and activities which will assist NASCO financially.



### **NASCO BOARD TRAVEL POLICY:**

NASCO shall reimburse Directors for all travel expenses exceeding \$200 in a given year, \$150 for individuals who do not have institutional support in funding their deductible. If the \$150 deductible will cause financial hardship, the deductible can be waived. Board members are directed to travel using low-cost excursion fares. Staff is directed to notify Board members five weeks in advance of a meeting to make travel arrangements and to schedule meetings to minimize travel expenses. A summary of travel expenses shall be distributed at each meeting.

### **SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Directors will attend NASCO Board meetings and, if an officer of the Board, NASCO Executive Committee meetings. Two unexcused absences in a year will result in dismissal from the Board.
2. Directors will make every effort to attend the NASCO Institute and the various governance-related functions held at that time. (Most Institute expenses are deferred for directors. Directors pay only food and travel expenses.)
3. Directors will keep abreast of NASCO issues and activities by reading and, when appropriate, responding to monthly reports and other Board materials.
4. Directors, when possible, will seek to support NASCO programs and service activities by assisting in NASCO's training and representational activities. (In most cases, NASCO will pay for all expenses associated with these activities.) For example, directors may assist in trainings, fundraising, recruitment, visits to Active Member co-ops, representation of NASCO at associating meetings, etc.
5. Directors of NASCO will, where appropriate, make themselves available to NASCO members and represent NASCO member opinions and concerns on the NASCO Board.



## Nominations Open for NASCO Board Elections

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Are you excited about the cooperative movement and eager to participate in the world of cooperatives beyond your member cooperative?

Do you have experience with board governance, fundraising, meeting facilitation, co-op management or committee leadership?

Do you want to be part of a bi-national organization that develops new cooperatives, manages common equity houses, and reaches thousands of cooperators in the U.S. and Canada with cooperative education?

**If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you should consider running for the NASCO Board of Directors!**

Nominations are now officially open for five seats on the Board.

Four of those seats are for 3-year terms and one is for a 1-year term.

You are invited to nominate someone to fill one of the open seats on the NASCO Board of Directors.

Please read the enclosed packet carefully, and look at the board description job description on our website: [www.nasco.coop](http://www.nasco.coop)

## Timeline

We have designed the timeline to give members sufficient time both during nominations and balloting to utilize whatever process they desire for these decisions. In order to ensure that this purpose is achieved, we will be strict on our deadlines.

September 4, 2015	Send out board nomination packets
November 6, 2015	All nomination forms must be signed and returned.
November 10, 2015	Ballot with candidate statements are sent out
January 18, 2016	Ballots are due
January 20, 2016	Results announced



# NASCO Board Candidate Statements

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## 2015-16 Elections

To allow NASCO members to make informed decisions while casting their votes during elections, candidates are asked to submit a statement. These statements are often the only information available about the candidates to NASCO's members when voting, so it is important to convey a good sense of who you are and what you would like to accomplish as a NASCO Board member.

We encourage you to familiarize yourself with NASCO's governance, programs, and the full board member job description before submitting your candidate statement. You can view those materials on our website: <http://www.nasco.coop>.

Candidate statements are due **no later than November 6, 2015**. This deadline will be strictly enforced in order to promptly distribute ballots to NASCO members.

Statements may be submitted by mail or email (**in .doc or .docx format, please**):

NASCO  
Attn: Elections  
330 S Wells St, Suite 618-F  
Chicago, IL 60606

[rek@nasco.coop](mailto:rek@nasco.coop)

*Please stay within word limits as over limit responses will have to be edited.*

### **Part I: Personal Data & Statement** (Limit 200 Words.)

Please provide a brief description of your relevant experience and qualifications. Include your involvement with co-ops and a statement on why you are running for the Board.

### **Part II: Questions** (Limit 600 Words total.)

Your answers to these questions will be re-printed with the candidate statements that are mailed out to our members.

- 1) Why are you involved in co-ops?
- 2) What is your vision of NASCO within the cooperative movement? What is important for NASCO's long-term success in cooperative education?
- 3) Of the items listed in the *Requirements of NASCO Directors* (in the board member job description), in what areas do you think you can best aid NASCO in its mission? What skills will you bring to the board?
- 4) How are you able to contribute to the organization outside Board meetings? How will your other commitments allow you to give time and energy to the Board over the next three years?
- 5) Are there specific issues you would like to work on as a board member?

## **The Shape of NASCO Today**

### ***The NASCO Cooperative Education and Training Institute***

Each November, over 400 participants from all over the United States, Canada, and beyond descend on Ann Arbor, Michigan to share ideas, learn new skills, and look at issues affecting the cooperative movement worldwide. NASCO's Cooperative Education & Training Institute, which has been providing cooperative training and education annually since 1977, is widely recognized as one of the most important training and networking opportunities available to cooperative managers, staff, directors, and members.

Workshops, skill shares, speakers, films, social events, caucuses, and the opportunity to meet cooperative members and leaders from across the continent (and more!) make the weekend a truly unforgettable experience. Institute participants describe the conference as a source of inspiration and a chance to gain valuable knowledge and skills to bring back to their co-ops. Scholarships are available through the NASCO Low Income Scholarship Fund, which provides Institute participants with reductions in registration fees as well as travel assistance.

### ***Training and Consulting***

NASCO works with its members and the general public on a variety of more extensive training and consulting activities. The NASCO staff visits Active Member cooperatives regularly, providing free consulting and training on a variety of topics as a member service. Additional training and consulting for both members and non-members is provided on a fee-for-service basis.

Workshop topics include meeting process, board roles and responsibilities, planning, staff relations, marketing, anti-oppression, conflict resolution, facilitation, consensus, and organizational development for new cooperatives. Workshops can also be developed by special request. Recent consulting efforts have included general manager evaluation assistance, business plan development, and expansion assistance. Other on-site consulting has included work on governance systems, accounting systems, maintenance planning, member recruitment, and participation strategies.

### ***Regional Activity***

NASCO supports and assists regional networking and training opportunities for co-op members and staff. NASCO member co-ops host regional gatherings, workshops, and social events where they can discuss issues pertinent to their co-ops.

### ***Staff and Managers' Conference***

NASCO annually sponsors a two-day conference for managers and staff of student co-ops, held every spring. This conference focuses on professional development and networking. Outside speakers and special sessions are scheduled.

### ***Anti-Oppression Education***

NASCO provides intensive trainings for leaders and active members of housing co-ops, worker collectives, and other democratically run communities. Resources and tools for engaging co-ops and communities in anti-oppression work are also available on NASCO's website.

### ***Linking and Networking Activities***

NASCO acts as the organized voice of the North American cooperative housing movement and the youth cooperative movement, both in terms of bringing together student and community coop activists, and in



maintaining relationships with national cooperative organizations, including the National Cooperative Business Association and the Cooperative Housing Federation of Canada.

### ***Shared Resource Library***

The Shared Resource Library is a virtual toolbox full of cooperative documents, links, and images. Looking for a board training manual? Want to share your house menus? The Shared Resource Library is the place to go to upload and download all types of useful files!

### ***Cooperative Jobs and Internships***

The Cooperative Internship Network provides organizations with qualified interns while building the skills and knowledge of a new generation of leaders. The Network provides a direct service by finding skilled students and young cooperators to help fill organizational needs. NASCO additionally posts job and internship opportunities with organizations and businesses in the cooperative sector in North America and beyond.

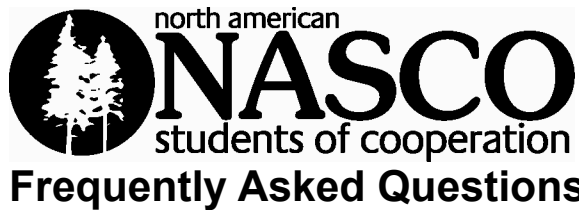
### ***Co-op Development Support and Assistance***

Special organizing and training resources are made available to groups interested in starting or expanding cooperatives. Working as staff for NASCO Development Services (NDS), NASCO provides an array of development services including assistance in pre-development activities, financial assistance, and startup assistance.

### ***National System for Property Ownership***

In 1988, NASCO Properties was established as an affiliate of NASCO to purchase and hold title to property around the United States, which are then leased to local coops. NASCO oversees NASCO Properties and through it provides assistance to the local leasing coops. Staff members visit each leasing coop at least three times per year to help with finances, maintenance, and other problems or issues that may arise.





### **1. Who is the Board of Directors?**

Our board of directors is composed of NASCO members, NASCO alumni, members of non-NASCO housing and worker cooperatives, and people no longer living in cooperatives but who remain active in the cooperative movement.

NASCO's Board consists of 12 individuals elected for three-year terms on a staggered basis, one Active Member Representative, elected by the Active Members at the NASCO Institute each year, one member selected by the NASCO Properties Board, one appointed representative from the People of Color Caucus, and two appointed caucus chairs: one chosen by the Diversity Congress at Institute and one chosen by the Board, based upon the changing needs and composition of the Board of Directors. The Diversity Congress and the People of Color Caucus have staggered two-year terms.

### **2. What does the board do?**

NASCO's Board of Directors, as in most cooperative organizations, sets the organization's policies and direction. By nominating a candidate for the board, your co-op helps to set that direction. Our board members help keep us responsive to the needs of the co-op movement. If you've got ideas of where NASCO could be headed and want to help us get there or if you know someone who does, this is your way to get involved.

### **3. What are the responsibilities of a board member?**

Board members are required to attend all board meetings: two annual in-person meetings and one conference call. The date and location of the next meeting will be announced shortly after the election results.

Board members are expected to attend and help run the annual Cooperative Educational and Training Institute in November. We also have an informal in-person board meeting the day after Institute. Board members are expected to put in time between meetings. Some activities our board members perform are: remaining active and engaged in committees, reporting to co-ops in their region, performing member visits, recruiting new members, teaching courses at the yearly NASCO Institute, and fundraising.

Please see the board member job description on our website [www.nasco.coop](http://www.nasco.coop) for more information

### **4. How do we nominate someone?**

Nominations can be made in three ways, as laid out in this section of the NASCO Bylaws:

#### **Nomination procedures:**

6.2 Nomination to the Board may be made in any one of three ways:

- (1) A petition signed by five (5) Individual Members, provided that no individual signs more than one (1) petition in each election.
- (2) Nomination by an Active Member provided that no Active Member may nominate more than one (1) person by this method.
- (3) Nomination by two (2) Associate Members, provided that no Associate Member may participate in more than (1) such joint nomination each election.

Once someone is nominated, they must submit a candidate statement of their background and interests so that members may cast educated votes.

### **5. What kinds of qualifications are needed to serve on the board?**

The NASCO board is open to anyone nominated through the Nominations process, or selected through



the Caucus or AMR process. The board seeks people who are dedicated and committed to serving their full terms, who are excited to participate in board and committee meetings, and who want to support the mission and vision of NASCO. You can contact the current board members to ask about specific skills they are seeking in board candidates at [nasco.board@nasco.coop](mailto:nasco.board@nasco.coop).

**6. Will we be responsible for the nominee's travel costs to and from board meetings?**

Your cooperative could choose to cover your nominee's travel should they be elected; this would mean helping pay for their travel costs to come to Board meetings three times per year. However, you are not required to do so. If you do not, they will be responsible for covering travel up to the deductible in the travel policy below.

This is the text of NASCO's board travel policy:

*NASCO shall reimburse Directors for all travel expenses exceeding \$200 in a given year, \$150 for individuals who do not have institutional support in funding their deductible. If the \$150 deductible will cause financial hardship, the deductible can be waived. Board members are directed to travel using low-cost excursion fares. Staff is directed to notify Board members five weeks in advance of a meeting to make travel arrangements and to schedule meetings to minimize travel expenses. A summary of travel expenses shall be distributed at each meeting.*