



# ARIZONA UNITED BERRIES COOPERATIVE

<https://azubc.coop/>

## Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer Position

The Arizona United Berries Cooperative, Inc (AZUBC) <https://azubc.coop/> is a newly formed enterprise that currently has more board members than members. Unlike the traditional way cooperatives are formed by having existing members who then elect a board, the technological basis, and requirements of getting into the business using greenhouse farming and the nature of the market mandated the creation of a multistakeholder structure premised on recruiting members after the formation of the cooperative.

AZUBC is committed to promoting family/small-scale farming as a significant contributor to local food development. Although there is a growing awareness of the health and environmental benefits of locally grown produce, constraints such as the costs, availability of land and the lack of economies of scale for the small producer place severe limits on those who can participate in the local food industry. The widespread adoption of controlled environment greenhouse farming by families and small groups opens a vista of opportunities for commercial scale production of local food by families and small-scale producers that coupled with wi-fi technology will transform the economies of many rural communities.

The cooperative support that is available from AZUBC will enable many families to benefit from an economy of scale of using controlled environment greenhouse as a viable and profitable way to participate in growing local food.

One of our aims is to empower families and small groups living in peri-urban towns and rural communities who do not have access to farmland. By extending greenhouse rooftop farming currently limited to large scale facilities in urban locations, to residential buildings, in these areas, can increase substantially the number of farming families and small groups that generate additional revenue from farming. The initial effort is to develop such residences on land that is available in peri-urban and rural towns and to eventually develop estates in which all the houses will have rooftop, solar powered controlled environment greenhouses. It is such a community of producers that will result in the benefits of economies of scale to make small scale greenhouse farming profitable.

The existence of a community of producers within an area will enable the viability of a centrally located facility with a business management structure to facilitate the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution of different types of berries.

We are appreciative that the concept of rooftop controlled environment greenhouse on residential buildings is not well-known and there could be cultural issues to its wide adoption. However, the growing population and the increasing conversion of existing farmland for estate development is likely to work in favor of using the concept to grow certain types of food.

We are proposing to establish a demonstration model that will be replicable/adaptable for our members.

On top of a specially designed duplex residential building, on a .25-acre piece of land we want to have designed and built a solar powered, soil-based, rooftop control environment greenhouse to grow strawberries (and other berries at a later stage).



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The chief executive officer will be more involved with board development and raising capital. We are looking for someone to work with the chief executive officer. Until we can think of a better designation, we are calling the position Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer. The person will have Co-CEO responsibilities and functions.

## **Responsibilities of the Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer**

The Assistant to the CEO will be responsible for the overall operation of the cooperative, as delegated by the board/CEO, relating to the management functions of planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling. This includes such operating decisions as planning the co-op's day-to-day activities, directing personnel, and coordinating operations.

The principal tasks are planning, reporting to the CEO, maintaining good organizational relations, and controlling the cooperative's operations. He/She will supervise and coordinate, under the CEO, the business activities of the co-op by managing the people, capital, and physical resources.

Among the functions that he/she will perform include

- ◆ Oversee the detailed operations of the cooperative, within the policies established by the board of directors, and recommend changes and additions.
- ◆ Hire, train, supervise, and set compensation for employees. He/she will also review their performance, and replace those employees not meeting acceptable performance levels.
- ◆ Develop clear job descriptions for all employees and the development and additional training of employees to acquire new skills and qualify for added responsibilities.
- ◆ Maintain, and revise as necessary, an adequate bookkeeping and accounting system; develop for board approval a financial budget annually; prepare proper financial reports regularly for board review; for presentation to the cooperative membership at the regular annual meeting, a report of the cooperative's operational highlights.
- ◆ Furnish information needed for long-range planning. This will bring matters, such as fixed asset additions or revisions, to the CEO/Board attention for review. He/she also will make recommendations that will assist in reviewing the organization's objectives and goals in establishing policies, regulations, and programs, and making related plans. Based on those objectives, the Assistant to the CEO will set goals and make short-range plans involving the daily business of the co-op, subject to approval.
- ◆ Represent the cooperative and portray a positive image to members and others in the community. He/she will
  - 1) encourage membership and active patronage;
  - 2) assist to communicate developments of the cooperative with members;
  - 3) educate the general public about the cooperative and its activities; and
  - 4) keep current on issues, local, State, and Federal regulations, and pending legislation affecting cooperatives.



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The operational success of the cooperative will depend more on the Assistant to the CEO. It is the Assistant to the CEO who will direct the day-to-day operations, the one in charge full time. He/She must have the passion to move the business forward successfully. Some of the leadership skills and qualities important for the Assistant to the CEO include:

- experience as a manager and leader;
- negotiation skills particularly with suppliers;
- experience with farming operations;
- ability to convey ideas and communicate effectively;
- genuine interest and belief in the cooperative system;
- a desire to succeed and continually improve performance;
- ability to carry forward the details of operating the business;
- ability to recognize differences in people and be flexible in dealing with them;
- good oral and written communication skills;
- business plan writing for raising capital with securities.

## **Compensation**

Compensation will be based on performance, with the annual salary of \$95,000-\$125,000 being negotiable; depending on education and experience; will be paid after the launching of the initial capital raise which is expected to occur not later than the third year.

The position can be done remotely and with the potential to become the CEO.