

Voter Guide

Please use this guide to aid your decision in casting this year's ballot. The board's hope is to provide additional, transparent information about candidates with Seward Co-op owners.

DESIGNATED EMPLOYEE DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

	TAMI BAUERS, Freelance Project Coordinator	MIA DIVECHA, Research Engineer	JOHN FIELDSTROM, Natural Foods Administration	VINA KAY, (INCUMBENT) Vice President, Movement Capacity Building at Race Forward	WARREN KING, Adjunct Professor	KAMERON LINDSEY, Environmental Technician/ Equity Advocate	DAN MADSEN, Retired Information Security Architect	BRIT MILLER, Customer Service	KATE SEYBOLD, Farm to School Coordinator, Minneapolis Public Schools	CLAIRE PURVEY HOUSTON, Bookkeeper	TK, Produce Re-Buyer
How many hours/month are you able to commit to BOD duties?	10–15	~10	30, up to 50 when needed	12–20	20	20–25	At least 20 hours	In addition to meetings, 2 to 12 hours, and more if necessary.	As much time as needed.	10–20	10–20
In a sentence, what do you think is the most important role of the board?	To be accountable to owners through board-created policies that care for Seward Co-op by monitoring the General Manager, who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the co-op to achieve the Ends.	To provide the framework, values, and policies that allow the management and staff to execute the Ends Statement of the co-op.	Set the direction of Seward and guide the cooperative to develop a healthy and justice-centered community.	To ensure the stability of the co-op and adherence to the Ends Statement.	Taking actions in the present that preserve Seward Co-op for future generations.	Provide oversight and guidance for the co-op under a shared mission, supporting management and staff in their work.	To represent the members in setting policies that enable the co-op to continue meeting its stated Ends as events change the operating environment.	Ensuring that our Ends guide us in decisions made, especially in regards to the longevity of the co-op and the impact on and wellbeing of the communities we serve.	To guide and govern with a clear, unified vision that embodies the values and interests of Seward Co-op and its stakeholders.	To be a cohesive guiding unit with the ultimate health and well-being of the co-op and workers as the highest board priority.	We must challenge systems of oppression, investigate the impact of our decisions, and take a bold stance to create a more sustainable and just future for the co-op and its members.
In a sentence, what do you think is the most important role of individual directors?	To stay informed and prepared, remain open-minded, speak one's opinion and then commit to board decisions.	To consolidate and holistically process information from members, employees, and industry peers in the context of the co-op's Ends Statement.	Act ethically and with humility, listen and consider the thoughts and values of other directors and member-owners, and use their individual skills and areas of expertise to move the cooperative forward.	Be prepared to engage in review, analysis, and decision making related to the conditions of the co-op, bringing thoughtfulness and integrity to board processes.	Working collaboratively with other board members, staff and owners.	Bringing their array of perspectives and skills to the board's governance, while committing to remaining accountable to the owners.	To contribute their skills and insights to inform the other board members during policy discussions.	Representing our multitude of owners in ensuring a bright long-term future for the co-op with positive social, environmental, and economic impacts on our community.	To advance the board's work by contributing personal expertise, seeking input from stakeholders, and being accountable to the co-op's mission and success.	To advocate on behalf of the business and the workers altruistically and logically.	Connect with members who we don't know as well, listen to their concerns and ideas, and be responsible to the membership and the neighborhoods that we're a part of.
What top two skills, qualities, or expertise would you bring to the board?	My ability to collaborate in a group by coming to agreements that are rooted in policy, bylaws and vision, while considering multiple stakeholders. I believe I have good relationships in the broader co-op community which could enhance cooperation among co-ops, which is crucial during challenging economic times.	An engineering, science, research-based mindset. A commitment to intersectional thinking.	My entire career has been in the natural foods industry, and I have especially grown in the areas of natural food retail leadership, operations, and merchandising. I am a trained and experienced community organizer with a Master's Degree in Social Justice and Community Organizing.	Extensive experience and analysis for advancing racial justice and collaborative leadership skills at organizational and board levels.	Fiduciary management and food system experience.	Experience analyzing policy to examine intention vs. impact. Navigating conflict and diffusing tension with strong communication and mediation skills.	As a former manager in two organizations, I am comfortable with numbers and reading financial reports. And I can analyze the relationships between the parts of a system to determine the steps needed to reach a goal.	Perspective thanks to talking and connecting with many owners in my role at the co-op. I'm ready to use my expertise to serve and advocate for our communities at the co-op.	I am experienced and deeply committed to working at the intersection of food and community to support equity, health, and sustainability. I will help the board develop sustainable plans for how to effectively pursue and uphold the co-op's Ends Statement.	Many years of experience and knowledge of our fiscal solvency and community relationships as well as a concise and empathetic approach to problem solving.	Over a decade of experience in consensus decision-making, facilitation, and policy writing. Comfortable with leaning into difficult conversations.
In a sentence, what is your vision for Seward Co-op?	To reaffirm its roots in being an excellent grocer that sells quality food, offers education, and provides a place of belonging for everyone in our community, while maintaining the fiscal health that allows Seward Co-op to be a leader.	To be a chosen destination for grocery products, a chosen employer, and a model for economically thriving cooperative businesses.	A co-op that is even more responsive to the needs of the local community, including but not limited to product selection. And a trusted community hub that actively supports the marginalized in its local community and acts as an example of democratic shared values.	That we practice and model authentic cooperative values in everything we do, so that the larger community is healthier and more equitable.	A thriving organization that meets the goals of it's Ends Statement and actively participates with others to change the current food system.	To be an ethical, socially conscious community that supports workers, actively invites new and diverse owners, builds health and resilience, and has great food!	To continue being exemplary model of "doing it right" for all its stakeholders in a changing milieu.	I would encourage our organization to champion legislation for the legalization of recreational cannabis, driven by our Ends to explore additional avenues for our co-ops' growth and longevity, while simultaneously supporting other local, small scale, cooperative, inclusive, and sustainable producers and businesses.	A thriving and inclusive community where stakeholders feel their bodies nourished, their principles and values represented, and their community sustained.	To reinforce a healthy and stable foundation both financially and environmentally in order to best cooperate and support our community.	I believe that the creativity and future-building that Seward needs can be found in the membership as a whole, and I dream of a co-op where members have a say in the direction of the organization, where members' concerns are acted upon and whose visions are made real.
How long have you been an owner of Seward Co-op?	since 1995	3 years	More than 5 years	3 years	Became owner in 2020	3 years, customer for 14	4 years	4 years	Long-time Seward shopper; became owner in 2020	Just inside of 13 years	Two and a half years
Have you ever served on a board before? If so, where? What boards do you currently serve on?	I served on Seward Co-op's board in the early 2000s. I do not currently serve on a board.	Not in an official capacity with fiduciary responsibilities.	No	I have served on many boards over the years, primarily of educational, arts, and social justice organizations. Currently, I serve only on the Seward Co-op board.	I have served as Chairman of FamilyFarmed, the Treasurer of the Ujamaa Community Land Trust, Secretary of the Fresno Food Commons Trust and President of the Food Commons Fresno Community Corporation. I currently serve on the boards of Seven Generations Ahead and Kidz Express.	No, but I have served on advisory bodies and am familiar with Seward's board policies and process.	I have not, but as a former bank vice president, I understand and have abided by fiduciary standards.	I've never served on a board but I have worked at two other cooperative grocers, starting in 2011.	I currently serve as Co-Chair for the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council, a community advisory board for the City of Minneapolis.	I've worked with two community theater boards in the past, but am not currently involved with any boards.	Previously: Membership and Engagement Officer and Vice-President of Madison Community Cooperative; Board Member of Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative. Currently: Secretary/Treasurer of Mutual Aid Twin Cities Housing Cooperative; Board Member of Boneshaker Books; Board Member of the Ventura Village Neighborhood Association
Do you have any potential or perceived conflicts of interest serving on Seward Co-op's board?	No	No	My employer, Independent Natural Food Retailers Association, serves other independent natural food retail stores that could theoretically be seen as competitors to Seward, though practically the potential competitors are not in the market or vicinity of Seward.	No	No	Maybe a perceived conflict, relationship with current board member.	No	I'm an employee and union steward at the Friendship store, I see these as assets; I'm extremely dedicated to the success of our co-op. Perhaps those roles could be perceived as a potential conflict of interest.	No	No	I'm currently a union steward for UFCW Local 663, and work on the floor at the Franklin store in the produce department.