We're Hiring: General Manager

Food Shed Co-op | Woodstock, Illinois

Salary: $75,000–$85,000, commensurate with experience, plus benefits

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Help Us Build a Thriving Grocery Business That Makes a Difference

The Food Shed Co-op is seeking an experienced, entrepreneurial grocery leader to guide our next chapter.

Opened in May 2024, the Food Shed is a community-owned grocery store serving Woodstock, Crystal Lake, and surrounding communities in northern Illinois. We're building a different kind of grocery business—one that supports local farmers and food producers, strengthens our local economy, and offers our community better food choices.

Our mission is rooted in the belief that a grocery store can be more than a place to buy food. It can be a catalyst for a healthier, more resilient local food system and a stronger community.

We're looking for a General Manager who combines strong business and financial management skills with a genuine appreciation for cooperative values. The successful candidate will lead our team, strengthen operations, grow sales, and help build a financially sustainable business that delivers on our mission.

This is an opportunity to do more than manage a grocery store. It's an opportunity to help shape its future.

Position Overview

The General Manager (GM) is responsible for the overall operational success, financial health, and strategic growth of the Food Shed Co-op.

Reporting directly to an elected Board of Directors, the GM provides leadership across all aspects of the business, including store operations, financial management, merchandising, employee development, customer service, and community engagement.

The GM is expected to balance sound business practices and financial accountability with our commitment to the **Triple Bottom Line—People, Planet, and Profit.**

Success requires a hands-on leader who understands the grocery business, develops capable teams, makes informed decisions using financial and operational data, and embraces the unique opportunities and responsibilities of a community-owned cooperative.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Planning & Organizational Leadership

- Develop and implement strategic and operational plans that advance the Co-op's mission, Ends, and organizational priorities.
- Translate strategic objectives into measurable departmental goals and hold managers accountable for results.
- Evaluate organizational structure, staffing, and operating practices to support efficiency, growth, and long-term sustainability.
- Identify opportunities for business improvement, expansion, and capital investment.
- Provide regular, accurate, and meaningful reporting to the Board of Directors.
- Work effectively within the Co-op's Policy Governance framework, including preparing timely and thorough monitoring reports demonstrating compliance with Board policies.

Financial Management & Business Performance

- Take ownership of the Co-op's financial performance, including sales, profitability, cash flow, inventory, labor costs, and operating expenses.
- Develop annual operating, capital, and cash budgets for Board approval and manage performance against those budgets.
- Analyze profit and loss statements, balance sheets, and other financial reports to identify trends, opportunities, and risks.
- Work with accounting professionals to ensure timely and accurate financial reporting.
- Use point-of-sale, inventory, and other retail management systems to improve margins, purchasing decisions, and operational efficiency.
- Communicate financial results and business performance clearly to the Board, management team, and other stakeholders.

Store Operations & Merchandising

- Oversee daily grocery operations, ensuring excellent customer service, product quality, cleanliness, safety, and store presentation.
- Work with department managers to improve merchandising, inventory management, product availability, and operating efficiency.
- Develop a competitive and distinctive product assortment emphasizing local, organic, natural, and sustainably produced foods.
- Build productive relationships with regional farmers, food producers, distributors, and other vendors.
- Ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, permits, and food safety requirements.
- Oversee facility maintenance, repairs, improvements, and contractor relationships.
- Continuously evaluate operations and implement practical improvements that enhance the shopping experience and financial performance.

Employee Leadership & Development

- Recruit, hire, train, develop, and evaluate a capable and engaged management team.
- Establish clear expectations, delegate responsibilities effectively, and hold employees accountable for performance.
- Foster a supportive, inclusive, collaborative, and results-oriented workplace.
- Promote open communication, professional development, and continuous improvement.
- Conduct regular staff meetings and ensure employees understand organizational priorities, performance expectations, and the Co-op's mission.
- Build a workplace culture where employees take pride in providing knowledgeable, friendly, and helpful customer service.

Marketing, Membership & Community Engagement

- Work with staff and the Board to strengthen the Food Shed's identity, visibility, and competitive position.
- Support effective marketing, merchandising, and community outreach initiatives that attract shoppers and increase sales.
- Encourage owner participation, engagement, and understanding of the cooperative business model.
- Represent the Co-op at owner meetings, community events, and other appropriate forums.
- Develop relationships with local businesses, farmers, producers, community organizations, and industry partners.
- Serve as a visible and credible ambassador for the Food Shed and its mission.

Qualifications & Experience

We are seeking an experienced grocery professional with strong business judgment, proven leadership ability, and a genuine interest in the cooperative business model.

Grocery Retail Experience

- At least three years of retail food store management experience preferred.
- Strong understanding of grocery operations and the key metrics that drive sales, margins, labor efficiency, customer service, and profitability.
- Demonstrated financial accountability for a retail business with annual sales approaching $3 million.
- Knowledge of natural foods, grocery merchandising, purchasing, inventory management, and café or prepared foods operations.
- Experience developing effective merchandising and marketing strategies in a competitive retail environment.

Financial & Business Management

- Strong financial acumen, including experience managing profit and loss statements, cash flow, budgets, and inventory.
- Ability to interpret financial and operational data, identify trends, and translate findings into sound business decisions.
- Demonstrated success improving business performance through effective planning, execution, and accountability.
- Ability to communicate financial information clearly to audiences with varying levels of financial expertise.

People & Organizational Leadership

- Proven ability to hire, develop, motivate, and manage employees and leadership teams.
- Strong interpersonal, communication, and conflict-resolution skills.
- Ability to establish clear expectations, delegate effectively, and follow through on commitments.
- Experience managing competing priorities in a fast-paced business environment.
- A collaborative leadership style that encourages initiative, accountability, and continuous learning.

Cooperative Values & Governance

- Genuine appreciation for cooperative principles and the role of community ownership.

- Understanding of, or willingness to develop expertise in, the cooperative business model and its unique ownership and governance structure.
- Experience working effectively with a Board of Directors.
- Experience with Policy Governance is strongly preferred.
- Commitment to transparency, accountability, ethical business practices, and constructive relationships with employees, owners, and community stakeholders.

Strategic & Operational Skills

- Ability to develop practical business plans and translate them into measurable results.
- Strong organizational, analytical, and problem-solving skills.
- Sound judgment in evaluating opportunities, managing risks, and making decisions.
- Comfortable using retail technology, business systems, and data to support management decisions.
- Ability to balance immediate operational needs with long-term organizational priorities.

Reporting Relationships & Governance

The General Manager reports directly to the Food Shed Co-op's elected Board of Directors.

The Board establishes organizational policies, defines the Co-op's Ends, and holds the General Manager accountable for organizational performance. The GM is responsible for managing the business and leading its employees within the boundaries established by Board policy.

The successful candidate will understand and respect the distinction between governance and management and will build a productive relationship with the Board based on trust, transparency, accountability, communication, and mutual respect.

The GM is expected to participate in monthly Board meetings and provide timely, accurate, and comprehensive monitoring reports and financial and operational information in accordance with the Board's established reporting requirements.

Compensation & Benefits

Annual salary: $75,000–85,000$, commensurate with experience.

Benefits include:

- Paid vacation, sick leave, and holidays
- Health insurance
- 20% employee purchase discount

- Employer-supported professional development, including relevant training, conferences, and educational opportunities

Why Join the Food Shed Co-op?

The Food Shed offers a distinctive leadership opportunity for someone who wants to combine business success with meaningful community impact.

As a relatively young cooperative grocery business, we're still building, learning, and growing. Our next General Manager will have an important role in shaping our culture, strengthening our operations, developing our team, and establishing the financial foundation for long-term success.

You'll work with people who care deeply about good food, local agriculture, environmental stewardship, and the economic vitality of our community.

We believe that **strong business performance and strong cooperative values belong together.** We're looking for a leader who shares that belief and has the skills and determination to put it into practice.

How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit a **resume and cover letter** describing their relevant experience and interest in the position to:

jobs@foodshed.coop

Please include **General Manager Position** in the email subject line.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Food Shed Co-op — Community Owned. Open to Everyone.