

Interview Questions for the [cooperative name] Executive Director Position

[date]

General Questions

- 1) What attracted you to the [cooperative name] Executive Director position at this point in your career?
- 2) [cooperative name] is a worker cooperative that is owned and democratically controlled by Certified Nursing Assistants and supportive home care providers. [cooperative name] is the first rural based home care co-op in the country. State and national policy makers are looking towards [cooperative name] as a potential model for replication. This attention is exciting, but after two years, we are experiencing growing pains. In an Executive Director, we are looking for an individual who combines some important qualities. Could you tell us about your experience in the following areas:
 1. Business skills in finances, administration, management, and marketing
 2. Home care, elder care, and care for people with disabilities
 3. Cooperatives, especially worker cooperatives

Marketing and Public Relations

- 3) For the home care industry, we are in the unusual situation of having very low worker turnover. In fact, many of our members want to work more hours, but [cooperative name] doesn't have enough work to go around. What would you do to increase the number of clients and the number of hours available to work?
- 4) Currently, [cooperative name]'s contract with the [county name] County Department of Human Services is 90% of our revenue. We would like to diversify our client base to include private pay clients and clients beyond the [county name] County borders. What ideas do you have to market our services and to bring in more work for our members?
- 5) Obviously, maintaining a good working relationship with [county name] County is critical to the future of [cooperative name]. Describe how you would foster that relationship and assure quality service delivery?

Management, Supervisory Experience, and Board Relations

- 6) (*Description of the Co-op's organizational chart*) In a cooperative, members are the owners of this business. Members elect from among themselves a Board of Directors. The Executive Director answers directly to the President of the Board of Directors. What has been your experience working with boards? What do you perceive as the role for the Board and your relationship with them?

- 7) In the home care industry, care providers often have limited contact with fellow members or with staff. What steps would you take to help members feel connected, to keep care providers informed, and to encourage a greater sense of ownership?
- 8) *Scenario:* There is talk among care providers that one of the members may be taking extra long breaks at client's homes and doesn't seem to do a very thorough job. The rumor in the community is that [cooperative name] workers are lazy. How would you as Executive Director handle the situation?

Budgeting and Financial Oversight

- 9) The Executive Director oversees a budget of over \$[dollar amount] million dollars. Our administrative staff is small, so your role will be very "hands on." Please tell us about your budgeting, payroll, and financial management background. Are you an experienced user of Quick Books, Publisher, web site design software, Internet tools, and other Microsoft office programs?
- 10) Health insurance for members is an important reason why care providers formed [cooperative name]. When writing the business plan in [year], we anticipated up to 1/3 of members enrolling in health insurance. However, our insurance costs have skyrocketed with annual increases between [number]%. We now have only [number] members carrying insurance. (For an individual plan, the Co-op contributes 75%; for a family plan, the Co-op pays 50%.) Do you have any suggestions on how to contain costs and assure that those who want insurance can afford to enroll?
- 11) There is a possibility that similar worker co-ops could develop across the state and Midwest. To spread overhead costs, an umbrella or federated co-op may form to handle payroll, pool liability and health insurance, offer training, create marketing, and engage in legislative advocacy and public visibility. Such an umbrella co-op would further our ultimate mission of providing a home care option to seniors and the disabled while improving caregiver wages and benefits. What skills could you bring to such an endeavor? Describe examples of how you have grown a small organization into a larger organization.

Final

- 12) What do you see are the strengths and weaknesses of [cooperative name]? What skills could you offer to overcome our weakness and build upon our strengths?
- 13) What is your vision for taking [cooperative name] through our growing pains towards a bright future? What would be your mission as the Executive Director?
- 14) Do you have any questions for us?

15) When would you be able to start?