



VIVA FARMS

GROWING FARMERS, COMMUNITY & FOOD

Viva Farms Board of Directors Policies



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Purpose of the Board

The purpose of the Board is to serve as the accountable fiduciary and provide strategic oversight for Viva Farms by:

- I. Supporting the development and implementation of a strategic plan;
- II. Informing and supporting the implementation of the annual Viva Farms operational work plan;
- III. Approving business plans or other expenditures related to the reduction, elimination or development of a service or business line or approving budget exceptions;
- IV. Recommending the strategic capital budget and approving the annual budget consistent with the Bylaws and the Financial Parameters policy;
- V. Approve the designation of the Executive Director and act as resource to the Executive Director to thrive in their role
- VI. Monitoring performance of the organization, including progress towards goals set in the strategic plan, an annual evaluation of the Board's performance and an annual evaluation of the Executive Director's performance;
- VII. Delegating to Subcommittees such authority as has been approved by the Board of Directors and coordinating among the Subcommittees as needed;
- VIII. Maintaining a quorum and an active and engaged board by recruiting individuals to serve as members of the Viva Farms' Board.
- IX. Supporting fundraising efforts by seeking out networking opportunities, contributing to general fund, and/or supporting the organizations' development goals.



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Officers and Meetings

- I. The Viva Farms board will meet at least 4 times annually, and additionally as necessary. Consistent email communication is expected, in addition to the occasional networking or organizational events. Meetings will be held in a hybrid fashion with remote always an option for our non-local members. We aspire to grow our board and plan to host a board retreat in the near future and annually following.
- II. All board members serve two year terms, with officer roles (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) appointed by the board to serve in roles for one year terms.
- III. Terms are renewable.



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Board Make-up

- I. At Viva Farms, we are building a just and resilient food system where farming is a financially viable livelihood - one that provides healthy and accessible food, preserves the diverse social and cultural values of the people who live and farm in our community, and protects the future of the planet. Because we envision a future full of farmers who better represent the fabric of their communities than today's average grower, we invite and encourage leaders from all cultures and communities to join our Board of Directors, including women, members of the queer community, Latino/a/x, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, people of all incomes, and people with different abilities.
- II. The ideal board membership number is 9-11 participants, including chair roles, who reflect the diversity of the participants we serve.
- III. We aim to have at least one participant farmer member (preferably including farmers from varying experience levels) from each Viva Farms incubating farm county at all times.
- IV. We are a bilingual organization (English-Spanish), but the business of the Board of Directors will be conducted in English.
- V. We welcome applications from outside of the region who can participate in the board virtually, via a hybrid meeting model.



Recruitment Criteria

Governing Board members shall be recommended and selected according to the following criteria:

- I. Respected in their sphere of influence, with a history of demonstrated expertise in their field;
- II. Strong alignment with our mission to empower aspiring and limited-resource farmers by providing bilingual training in holistic organic farming practices, as well as access to land, infrastructure, equipment, marketing and capital;
- III. Lived personal or professional experience in related fields that support Viva Farms' goals of a diverse, supportive, and contributing board;
- IV. Commitment to joining organizational fundraising efforts by seeking out networking opportunities, contributing to general fund, and/or supporting the organizations' development strategy;
- V. Capability to act as thought partners, strategic visionaries, critical and system thinkers;
- VI. Ability to participate actively in Governing Board deliberations and possess the necessary interpersonal skills to interact effectively with other board members, Viva Farms staff, Viva Farms farmers and participants and organizational partners;
- VII. Willing and able to actively promote and enhance the well-being of the Viva Farms' community;
- VIII. Willing to dedicate the time necessary for ongoing education, as well as the time necessary to prepare for, and regularly participate in, Governing Board and committee meetings and necessary follow-up activities;
- IX. Willing to abide by Viva Farms' Board Code of Conduct policies, including conflict of interest and confidentiality;
- X. Expressing genuine and enthusiastic interest and capacity to serve;



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- XI. In order for the board to function as strategic leadership for Viva Farms, we seek members who have demonstrated success and experience in the following categories. It is not expected that each member can act as expert on *all* of the below, but we hope to create a mix of knowledge rooted in the topics listed below.
- A. Value-driven commitment to Viva Farms' mission
 - B. Fields of Knowledge
 1. Agriculture
 2. Education & training
 3. Knowledge of or lived experience in the community(ies) we serve: new and historically underserved farmers ([per the USDA's definition](#))
 4. Community service
 5. Finance, accounting
 6. Human resources
 7. Legislation & public policy, particularly as applies to land, organic food and agriculture, farmworkers, and other matters of acute interest to Viva Farms' participants
 8. Outreach & advocacy
 9. Public relations, communication
 10. Board development
 11. Fundraising
 12. Leadership
 13. Nonprofit Administration
 14. Policy development
 15. Program evaluation



Membership Renewal & Nomination Process

- I. In order to maintain experience on the board, Viva Farms strives to recruit and maintain membership via classes of two-year terms. These should be classes of at least three members who then share the timeline of orientation, renewal or retirement from the position.
 - A. At the close of each cycle, the board will evaluate members up for reappointment to determine if there are upcoming vacancies to fill.
- II. In the case of an anticipated vacant seat(s), the Board Chair, in partnership with the Executive Director as needed, shall lead a Nomination process as outlined below.
 - A. Alert the board and Viva Farms' leadership team of the upcoming vacancies and encourage brainstorming of who could step in.
 - B. Collaborate with Viva Farms staff (Communications Manager) to share the recruitment notice with the public.
 - C. Recommendations or resumes should include the skills, experience, or other qualifications as outlined in Viva Farms Board Recruitment Criteria.
- III. The call for nominations will open consecutively with the application materials. While anyone can apply, it is expected that active recruitment will be necessary to build interest and shape the board in accordance with Criteria.
- IV. Completed applications will be shared with the full Viva Farms board.
- V. Upon receiving applications, the Board Development Committee (a mix of leadership staff and board members) will assess the new, potential members and determine if the member meets the qualifications. If so, the Board Development Committee will invite the potential new member to an interview and assess the candidate.
 - A. The individual will be assessed for a high level of personal and professional integrity and commitment to promote the long-term interests of Viva Farms. The process should convince the interviewer the potential board member can commit adequate time to serve





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Membership Benefits

- I. All members will receive a Viva Farms CSA discount equivalent to the staff discount.
- II. Farmer members will receive a \$300 stipend, OR a Viva Farms CSA discount equivalent to the staff discount.
- III. A Viva Farms t-shirt and staff discount on other merchandise

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