Bill Gessner GM Coaching Award Application

Apply by March 31, 2026

National Co+op Grocers

"The spirit of generosity is a gift. To give is to trust. To give is to invest. To give is to receive. Through giving, we learn about the concept of abundance. Our world is not limited. The spirit of generosity helps us see the world as unlimited, with infinite potential. . . . If we believe in the values of cooperation — honesty, justice, equity, etc. — and if we believe that the world would be better if more people acted on these values, then we should act on them with each other."
— Bill Gessner (1947–2019)

Bill Gessner worked with more than 300 co-ops over the last 25 years of his life, consulting, advising, challenging and mentoring. In these relationships, Bill created a trustful environment, provided encouragement and support, offered guidance and inspiration in a spirit of generosity, and never lost his sense of wonderment of the world and of human capability. This award is to honor and remember Bill's commitment to and support of professional development of food co-op general managers through coaching.

Award
NCG will award up to $3,000 each year for the Bill Gessner Coaching Award.

Purpose
This award is to provide monetary support for a food co-op general manager to access coaching services in order to achieve identified goals and outcomes and enhance that general manager's professional abilities.

Eligibility
Any general manager of an open and operating food co-op. The award is not limited to NCG members.

Award Criteria
Applicant will:

1. Define a clear need or challenge they are facing, with identifiable goals or outcomes to address and overcome the challenge.
2. Identify the goals or outcomes that can be completed within 12 months of the receipt of the award, either as a yearlong project or as part of a longer project.
3. Identify the coach with whom they will work.
4. Have demonstrated a commitment to the Cooperative Principles and the growth of a cooperative business.

Summary Report
Award recipients commit to submitting a status report to the NCG Bill Gessner Coaching Award Committee on progress and outcomes at the end of the coaching engagement or within 12 months of receiving the award, whichever is sooner.

Application Deadline
Please submit the completed application by March 31, 2026 via our application survey (preferred) or email your answers in a separate document directly to Amy Fields.

Application Questions

1. Please provide the following information about yourself:

   First and Last Name
   Co-op Name
   Phone Number
   Email Address

2. Describe why you are applying for this coaching support award.

3. Describe how coaching will enhance your professional abilities (as opposed to a consultant helping you solve business challenges)

4. What are your desired outcomes for the coaching engagement? Please describe these outcomes in terms of measurable goals.

5. Do you anticipate that the goals identified will be completed within a year of receipt of award money? If your coaching goals are part of a longer-term project, what do you plan to achieve within one year?

6. If selected for this award, who will be your coach? Please provide a brief bio (or attach a resume for that individual). Why do you believe this individual is best suited to be your coach?

7. How much time will you invest, both with the coach and in individual work?

8. What financial capacity does your co-op have to provide professional development and coaching support for you? Would you be able to get coaching support without this award?

9. Do you commit to writing a status report to be submitted to the NCG Bill Gessner Coaching Award Committee nine months after receiving the award and agree that your story may be shared? (Yes/No/Unsure)

10. Is there anything else you would like the award committee to consider as part of your application?

Please contact Amy Fields at National Co+op Grocers
if you have any questions regarding this application,
The Bill Gessner GM Coaching award, or the award
criteria.