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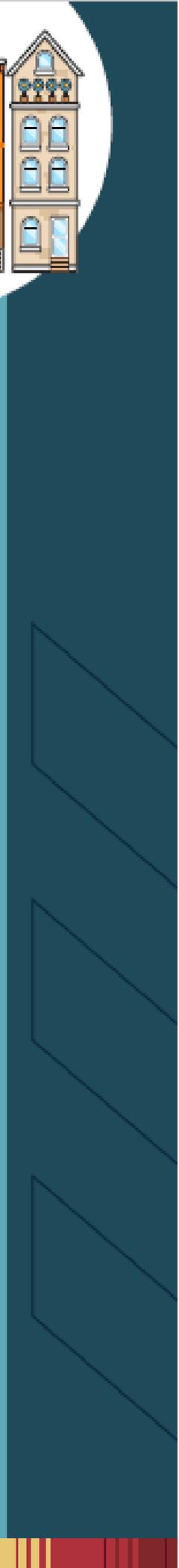
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# Housing Cooperative Membership Guide

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This **Housing Cooperative Membership Guide** is a document or resource that provides prospective and current members of a housing cooperative (co-op) with important information about how the co-op operates, the rights and responsibilities of members, and the process of becoming a member. Housing co-ops are a form of shared ownership where members collectively own and manage their housing.

This resource book provides valuable information, resources, and tools to help you effectively structure and support your housing cooperative. It serves as a comprehensive reference guide for organizing and sustaining your cooperative.



# Membership

Being a member of a housing cooperative means joining a collective that owns and manages a housing property. Instead of owning individual units, members buy shares, which give them the right to occupy a specific unit in the building. Members contribute to the upkeep and operations of the cooperative by paying monthly dues, which cover costs such as repairs, utilities, and staff salaries.

Cooperatives are typically less expensive than traditional housing, as they are often non-profit organizations. Members have voting rights, allowing them to participate in decisions about the property, including rules, budgets, and improvements. This creates a more community-oriented living environment, where everyone shares responsibilities and has a say in how things are run. Housing cooperatives also provide more stability compared to renting, as members cannot be evicted without reason.

# Member Rights

When you join a co-op, you invest money and become both a resident and an owner. As a co-op owner, your focus is not just on sustainability but also on whether the cooperative is meeting the needs of its member-owners.

- Participate in important decision making such as amending the articles of incorporation and bylaws.
- Power to elect and remove directors.
- Review annual reports.
- Fair access to common areas of the property without restrictions
- Contribute a fair share of all co-op expenses.
- To be notified with time ahead of annual meetings.
- To make decisions on the future of the cooperative.

# Member Responsibilities

- To hold directors accountable and ensure they operate the cooperative in accordance with articles of incorporation and bylaws.
- To provide necessary capital, with each member contributing their fair share of capital as an owner of a cooperative.
- To stay informed about issues that affect the co-op.
- To pay financial charges in due time.
- To comply with co-op rules and board policies
- To attend membership meetings.
- To vote on issues presented to the membership for decision.
- To respect and care for all common areas.
- To act as an owner, not a tenant.
- Actively be involved in the co-op's committees and activities.

# The Democratic Model

The democratic model of cooperative housing is based on the idea that all members have a say in decisions that affect the property and the community. Instead of a single person or entity making the decisions, management is done collectively. Each member can vote on important matters such as the budget, improvements, rules of coexistence and maintenance of the property, which encourages more transparent and equitable management. In addition, each member has one vote, regardless of the number of shares they own, which guarantees equality in the decision-making process. Decisions are made in democratic meetings, where relevant issues are discussed and voted on, which promotes collaboration and solidarity among members. This model also implies shared responsibility, as members not only participate in decisions, but are also responsible for the care and maintenance of the building and its common services, creating a fairer and more participatory environment.

## **Democratic Model**

Cooperatives claim to be democratic institutions, but the true meaning of democracy requires further examination. The term democracy, derived from the Greek word for rule by the people, suggests that every individual has an equal vote. While many nations claim to be democratic, participation in decision-making can often be limited. Historically, democracy was met with skepticism, with critics arguing that while its ideals are noble, the conditions for success are difficult to achieve.

## **Democratic Principles**

A successful democracy emphasizes three key conditions: a small, closely-knit community where everyone can easily interact and know one another; a significant level of equality in wealth and status to ensure that equal rights and authority can be maintained; and minimal or no luxury, which corrupts both the rich and the poor and luxury fosters greed and vanity, weakening the integrity of the society and leading its members to become slaves to one another and to the influence of public opinion. Only in a society with these conditions can democracy truly thrive, free from the corrupting influences of wealth and excess.

# Bylaws

Housing co-op bylaws are the rules and guidelines that govern the day-to-day operations of the co-op. They outline how the co-op will operate, including procedures for membership, voting, meetings, and the responsibilities of members and the board of directors. Bylaws may also cover issues such as share allocation, fees, maintenance obligations, and dispute resolution. Essentially, they provide a structured framework to ensure that the co-op runs smoothly and fairly for all members.

The bylaws explain how the corporation operates, including meeting procedures, the number of directors, and membership meeting structure. They can usually be amended by a majority vote, with the process outlined in the bylaws. Board members should know the bylaws and review them annually.

<b>Article I</b>	<b>Name and location of cooperative</b>
<b>Article II</b>	<b>Purpose and powers</b>
<b>Article III</b>	<b>Membership</b>
<b>Article IV</b>	<b>Member meetings</b>
<b>Article V</b>	<b>Directors</b>
<b>Article VI</b>	<b>Officers</b>
<b>Article VII</b>	<b>Committees</b>
<b>Article VIII</b>	<b>Financial regulations</b>
<b>Article IX</b>	<b>Seal</b>
<b>Article X</b>	<b>Waiver of notice</b>
<b>Article XI</b>	<b>Repeal or amendment of bylaws</b>
<b>Article XII</b>	<b>Dissolution of property interest of members</b>

The cooperative's bylaws describe the roles, responsibilities, and operating guidelines of the board within a housing cooperative.

These bylaws typically include:

**Board composition** defines the number of directors, how they are elected, and the qualifications required to serve on the board.

**Election and term of office** describes how board members are elected (usually by cooperative members) and the length of their terms.

**Duties and powers** specify the board's responsibilities, such as overseeing the cooperative's operations, managing finances, making policy decisions, and ensuring the cooperative's mission is fulfilled.

**Meetings** establish the frequency of board meetings, the procedures for convening them, and how decisions are made (e.g., voting rules).

**Committees** may detail standing committees (such as finance or maintenance) and their functions in assisting the board's work.

**Removal and Vacancy** describe how board members can be removed or replaced if necessary.

These bylaws ensure that the board of directors operates efficiently, ethically, and in the best interests of the cooperative and its members.

# The Bylaws: The Foundation of a Successful Housing Cooperative

Bylaws are the backbone of a successful housing cooperative, as they establish a clear structure for its operation. They define the roles of the board of directors and members, ensuring that decisions are made fairly and transparently. By including rules on elections, voting, and financial management, bylaws help maintain order and ensure that the cooperative runs smoothly for everyone involved. This structure fosters trust, participation, and collaboration in the community toward shared goals.

They also set expectations for daily life, from the use of common areas to the distribution of maintenance responsibilities. By defining rules about resolving disputes and making important decisions—such as property repairs or financial planning—bylaws reduce uncertainty and prevent conflicts. This ensures that key decisions benefit the entire cooperative, while maintaining balance and fairness.

Another fundamental aspect is financial stability. The statutes regulate the collection of dues from members, the administration of the budget, and the use of surplus funds. With these well-established standards, the cooperative can stay financially healthy, avoid mismanagement, and secure the necessary resources for maintenance and improvements.



# Unfair Bylaws

## **Bylaws That Restrict Members' Right to Participate in Governance-Violation of Members' Right to Vote or Run for Office:**

Bylaws that unduly restrict the right of cooperative members to vote, run for office, or participate in the decision-making process are generally not permitted. Illinois law requires cooperatives to maintain democratic governance, thereby guaranteeing members' right to participate. Example: A bylaw that restricts voting rights to only certain categories of members, such as those who have been with the cooperative for a certain number of years, may violate democratic principles and be subject to challenge.

## **Limitation of Legal Actions or Remedies**

### **Bylaws That Waive Legal Rights:**

Any provision in the bylaws that exempts the cooperative from its legal liability or limits members' ability to take legal action is generally prohibited. Example: A bylaw requiring members to waive their right to sue the cooperative for negligence or other legal claims is likely unenforceable under Illinois law.

### **Unlawful Rent or Fee Contracts- Prohibited Rent-Setting Practices:**

Housing cooperatives in Illinois may not enact bylaws that set rents or membership fees in ways that violate Illinois Rent Control laws (where applicable) or the Illinois Human Rights Act. For example, a bylaw that enacts discriminatory rent-setting practices based on prohibited criteria (e.g., race or gender) would be unlawful. Example: A bylaw that allows different rent charges based on gender or race would violate federal and state anti-discrimination laws.

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In Illinois, as in other states, housing cooperatives must comply with certain legal requirements when drafting their bylaws to ensure compliance with state and federal laws. While cooperatives have flexibility in determining the internal rules governing their operations, certain provisions are prohibited or restricted by Illinois law. Below are examples of statutes that would generally be considered prohibited or unenforceable in Illinois housing cooperatives:

**Discriminatory Provisions: Violation of the Fair Housing Act:**

Any statute that discriminates against high-income members or prospective members on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, marital status, disability, or other characteristics protected by federal law (Fair Housing Act) or Illinois state law (Illinois Human Rights Act) is prohibited. Example: A statute that restricts membership to people of a certain race, ethnicity, or religion would be illegal.

**Exclusion of Certain Members by Protected Classifications:**

Discrimination on the basis of family status or disability: Statutes that restrict membership or residence based on familial status (e.g., prohibiting families with children from membership) or disability (e.g., prohibiting individuals with disabilities from membership) violate the Fair Housing Act and Illinois law. Example: A cooperative that prohibits membership for families with children or people with disabilities would face legal challenges. Imposition of Unreasonable Restrictions on

**Membership or Unreasonable Membership Criteria:** Bylaws that impose restrictions on membership or eligibility that are arbitrary or unrelated to the purpose of the cooperative (such as unreasonable financial barriers or overly restrictive selection practices) may be challenged. Example: A statute that imposes an unreasonable income requirement for membership that excludes a significant portion of the population may be considered discriminatory.

**Laws that violate public policy or Contrary to public policy:**

Laws that conflict with Illinois state or federal laws may be considered void or unenforceable. For example, statutes that attempt to circumvent state laws governing the rights of tenants or homeowners may not be valid. Example: A statute that allows the co-op to circumvent Illinois landlord-tenant laws related to eviction or rent control could be illegal.

Illegal rental or quota contracts or Prohibited rent-fixing practices:

Housing cooperatives in Illinois may not enact bylaws that set rents or membership dues in a manner that violates Illinois rent control laws (where applicable) or the Illinois Human Rights Act. For example, a statute that enacts discriminatory rent-setting practices based on prohibited criteria (e.g., race or gender) would be illegal. Example: A statute that allows different rent charges based on gender or race would violate federal and state anti-discrimination laws.

# Articles of incorporation

Housing cooperative articles of incorporation are the legal documents that formally establish the cooperative as a recognized entity. These documents are filed with the appropriate government authority and define the cooperative's purpose, structure, and governance. They include details such as the cooperative's name, mission (such as providing affordable housing), legal structure (usually nonprofit or member-owned), membership rules, board responsibilities, and financial management guidelines. Essentially, articles of incorporation create the legal basis for the cooperative to operate within the law.

## **Articles of Incorporation**

The articles of incorporation are the legal documents that establish the cooperative as a business, governed by state laws. They specify the co-op's name and its purpose, which is to provide housing for its members. These articles are important for the co-op's operation and are hard to change. They should allow the co-op to run on a cooperative basis, cover costs, and provide patronage rebates to members. When properly written, they enable the co-op to be taxed under subchapter T of the Internal Revenue Code, which minimizes tax costs. The articles should also allow members to deduct mortgage interest and property taxes, like homeowners. They should define the purpose of the co-op, such as managing multifamily housing, and can include specific government programs or restrictions. The articles must also allow for amendments and outline the board of directors' role in managing the co-op. If changes are needed, consulting an attorney is recommended.

<b>Article I</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Article II</b>	<b>Location of Principal Place of Business</b>
<b>Article III</b>	<b>Location of Registered Office</b>
<b>Article IV</b>	<b>Name and Address of Resident Agent</b>
<b>Article V</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>Article VI</b>	<b>Number of Directors</b>
<b>Article VII</b>	<b>Capital Stock</b>
<b>Article IX</b>	<b>Names of Incorporators and Initial Directors</b>
<b>Article X</b>	<b>Membership Termination</b>
<b>Article XI</b>	<b>Duration</b>

These articles guide how a housing co-op accepts new members, making sure the process is fair and transparent. They usually cover:

**Who Can Join** – Any specific requirements, like income limits or a commitment to cooperative living.

**How to Apply** – Steps like filling out an application, attending an orientation, or going through an interview.

**Who Decides** – Whether a committee or the board reviews and approves new members.

**Costs to Join** – Any fees or share purchases required to become a member.

**Trial Periods** – Some co-ops have a probation period before granting full membership.

**Member Responsibilities** – Making sure new members understand their role, like attending meetings or helping with upkeep.

The articles of incorporation help a co-op find the **right** shareholder by setting clear expectations and guidelines for membership. Here's how they make the process successful:

**Defining Eligibility** – They outline who qualifies to join, ensuring new members align with the co-op's values and financial model.

**Standardizing the Selection Process** – A structured application, interview, and approval process helps maintain fairness and consistency.

**Ensuring Financial Commitment** – By requiring share purchases or membership fees, bylaws help secure financially responsible members.

**Clarifying Responsibilities** – Prospective members understand their duties, like attending meetings or contributing to maintenance, before joining.

**Allowing for a Trial Period** – Some co-ops include a probationary period to confirm that new members are a good fit.

**Providing a Path for Conflict Resolution** – Bylaws outline how disputes are handled, ensuring a stable and cooperative environment.

Housing cooperative articles of incorporation are legal documents that officially establish the cooperative as a formal entity. Filed with the appropriate government agency, they describe the cooperative's purpose, structure, and governance. Key details include

**The name of the cooperative**, the mission (usually focused on providing affordable housing).

**The legal structure (usually non-profit or member-owned).** Membership rules (such as how people come together and their rights and responsibilities).

**The structure and powers of the board of directors** and the bylaws governing day-to-day operations.

**Bylaws** rules governing the day-to-day operation of the cooperative, including voting procedures, meetings, and member responsibilities.

**Commitments and assets** which is information about how the cooperative will handle financial affairs, including liabilities, assets, and profit allocation (if any).

The articles of incorporation take care of financial issues such as liabilities, assets, and the distribution of profits. Basically, these documents establish the legal basis for the operation of the cooperative, ensuring that it operates within the legal and agreed frameworks.

# **The Board of Directors**

A housing cooperative's board of directors is made up of elected members from the community, and their main task is to make key decisions about how the cooperative is run. It is responsible for planning policies, overseeing finances, managing resources, and resolving any issues that arise among members. He also acts as the representative of the cooperative vis-à-vis other entities and ensures that everything runs smoothly and in accordance with regulations.

The **Board of Directors** plays a critical role in ensuring the success of a housing cooperative by providing governance, leadership, and oversight. Here's how they contribute to the long-term success and stability of the co-op:

### **Setting Vision and Strategy**

The board defines the co-op's vision, mission, and long-term goals, providing direction for the cooperative's activities. These strategic plans help ensure decisions and actions are aligned with the values and needs of the members.

They guide the development and evaluation of the co-op's strategic initiatives to ensure growth and stability.

### **Financial Oversight and Management**

The board is responsible for the financial health of the cooperative, overseeing budgets, financial reports, and ensuring the co-op meets its financial obligations (e.g., paying bills, maintenance costs, or mortgages). They ensure that resources are allocated effectively, and that the cooperative operates within its means, helping it remain financially sustainable.

### **Ensuring Legal and Ethical Compliance**

The board ensures that the cooperative follows all relevant laws, including housing and tax regulations, and complies with its own bylaws and policies. They maintain transparency in the cooperative's operations and decision-making, which helps build trust among members and the community.

### **Representing and Advocating for Members**

Board members represent the interests of the cooperative's members. They listen to members' concerns and needs, ensuring their voices are considered in decision-making processes.

The board also advocates for the co-op, building relationships with local governments and organizations that support the co-op's mission.

### **Providing Leadership and Support**

The board sets policies and procedures that guide the cooperative's operations. They may create committees to manage specific tasks, like maintenance or membership, making the co-op's functions more efficient.

They support staff and leadership, ensuring they have the resources and training needed to run the day-to-day operations effectively.

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**How to Apply:** Steps like filling out an application, attending an orientation, or going through an interview.

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**Costs to Join:** Any fees or share purchases required to become a member.

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**Allowing for a Trial Period:** Some co-ops include a probationary period to confirm that new members are a good fit.

**Providing a Path for Conflict Resolution:** Bylaws outline how disputes are handled, ensuring a stable and cooperative environment.

The **Board of Directors** plays a critical role in managing the cooperative and ensuring its success. However, its powers and responsibilities are limited by the cooperative's bylaws, the law, and its principles. Below is a breakdown of what a board **can** and **cannot** do.

# What a Board of Directors Can Do in a Housing Cooperative.

## Set Policies and Strategic Direction

The board of directors can establish the cooperative's vision, mission, and long-term goals. It can establish policies and strategies for the cooperative's operations, including financial management, membership, maintenance, and community involvement.

## Manage Finances

The board of directors is responsible for overseeing the cooperative's financial health, including approving budgets, controlling expenses, and ensuring that the cooperative meets its financial obligations (e.g., mortgage payments, taxes, and maintenance expenses). It can set rent or membership dues, allocate resources, and make decisions regarding capital improvements or loans.

## Make Key Decisions

The board of directors has the authority to make important decisions affecting the cooperative, such as approving major expenses, investments, or changes to the cooperative's structure.

It may create committees for specific tasks (such as maintenance, finance, and membership) and delegate responsibilities to these committees.

## Approve or Remove Members:

The board of directors may establish membership criteria and approve or deny applications based on these criteria. If a member fails to comply with the cooperative's rules or obligations (such as paying dues), the board of directors may have the authority to dissolve the cooperative, subject to the cooperative's bylaws and due process.

## Ensure Legal Compliance:

The board of directors ensures that the cooperative complies with all local, state, and federal laws, including housing regulations, tax laws, and cooperative-specific rules. It is responsible for ensuring that the cooperative complies with all legal and ethical standards.

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## **Encourage member participation and education**

The board encourages members to get involved in the cooperative by participating in meetings, decision-making, and community events.

They could organise educational opportunities to help members understand the governance of the cooperative, their rights and how to contribute to the success of the cooperative.

## **Decision-making and conflict resolution**

As a decision-making body, the board makes critical decisions, such as approving changes to the bylaws, financial commitments, and admissions of members. They ensure that decisions are made democratically and in the best interests of the cooperative.

The board also resolves conflicts among members, helping to mediate disagreements and ensuring a fair and balanced process.

## **Performance monitoring and evaluation**

The board regularly monitors the cooperative's performance, assessing financial health, operational efficiency, and fulfillment of its mission. This helps identify areas for improvement and ensures that the cooperative stays on track.

They review reports and use this information to guide decisions and adjustments to keep the cooperative moving forward.

## **Leadership Succession Planning**

The board plans for continuity of leadership by identifying and mentoring future leaders within the cooperative. This ensures that the cooperative is prepared for leadership transitions and minimizes disruptions.

Succession planning helps ensure that the cooperative continues to thrive even as leadership changes over time.

The Board of Directors is essential to the success of a housing cooperative. They provide strategic guidance, ensure financial stability, represent members, uphold the values of the cooperative, and make key decisions that maintain the sustainability and success of the cooperative. Their role is to provide oversight and leadership, while helping the cooperative adapt to new challenges and opportunities.

## **Supervise the Management Team**

In larger housing cooperatives with professional staff or a management team, the board of directors oversees their work. It hires, evaluates, and, if necessary, removes the management team or individual employees.

## **Represent the Cooperative to External Stakeholders**

The board of directors represents the cooperative in its dealings with third parties, such as government agencies, potential investors, community groups, and other organizations. It may also act as an advocate for the cooperative in the broader community.

# **What a Board of Directors Cannot Do in a Housing Cooperative:**

### **Ignore the Will of the Members:**

The board of directors cannot make decisions that go against the majority will of the cooperative's members, especially on matters such as changes to the bylaws, member policies, or important financial decisions. Important decisions must be made democratically and with member participation. For example, the board of directors cannot approve a rent increase or request a large loan without member approval if the bylaws require such decisions to be voted on by members.

### **Amend the bylaws without member approval:**

The board cannot unilaterally amend the cooperative's bylaws. Any amendment to the bylaws typically requires a member vote. The board can propose changes, but members must approve them.

### **Operate outside the cooperative's purpose or values:**

The board cannot make decisions that contradict the cooperative's guiding principles, purpose, or values. For example, it cannot make financial decisions that jeopardize the cooperative's affordability or sustainability, especially if they contradict the cooperative's commitment to providing affordable housing.

### **Ignore the principles of democratic governance:**

The board cannot act as an authoritarian and authoritarian body. Housing cooperatives operate according to democratic principles, and the board of directors must ensure that decisions are made collaboratively and with the participation of members. It cannot restrict members' right to participate in meetings or vote on key issues.

**Ignoring the Principles of Democratic Governance:** The board cannot operate in an authoritarian manner. Housing cooperatives are governed by democratic principles, and the board must ensure that decisions are made collaboratively and with the participation of members. It may not restrict the right of members to participate in meetings or vote on key issues.

**Making decisions without transparency or accountability.** The board cannot make decisions in secret or without providing adequate transparency to members. Board members are expected to communicate clearly and regularly with members about decisions, financial matters, and any major changes.

**Act against the best interest of the Cooperative.** The board cannot make decisions that benefit individual board members or external stakeholders about the cooperative as a whole. They are legally obligated to act in the best interests of the cooperative and its members, not for personal gain.

Neglect of members' rights:

**The board cannot ignore the rights of members.** This includes ignoring complaints, failing to address issues raised by members, or allowing discrimination or exclusion in the cooperative. All members should be treated fairly, and the board should provide channels to address grievances.

## If you need to make changes to the Board of Directors

Making changes to a housing cooperative's Board of Directors generally follows a democratic process outlined in the cooperative's bylaws. Here are the common steps to change the Board of Directors:

Review the Statutes of the Cooperative

**Understand the process:** The cooperative's bylaws will provide specific guidelines on how changes can be made to the board. This may include the procedure for electing new board members, removing existing members, or even changing the board structure.

**Terms and conditions:** Bylaws often specify the length of board members' terms, how many members there should be, and how vacancies should be filled.

# How to Remove a Member from the Board of Directors

The removal of a member of the board of directors in a housing cooperative must follow the procedures established in the bylaws and respect democratic principles.

## Key Steps:

1. **Review the Bylaws** - Verify the procedure and requirements for removal.
2. **Valid Reasons Breach of duties**, conflict of interest, abuse of power or lack of participation.
3. **Filing a Petition** - It can be initiated by the board or a group of members with the required endorsement.
4. **To convene an Assembly** - To notify the affected member and allow his defense.
5. **Voting** requires a simple or qualified majority, according to the statutes.
6. **Replace the Position** - Follow the established process to fill the vacancy.

This process must be transparent and democratic, ensuring that leadership continues to represent the interests of the community.

# Board Roles

The board of directors is crucial for a cooperative because it ensures its proper functioning and alignment with cooperative principles. By making strategic decisions and managing resources efficiently, you ensure that the cooperative operates transparently and fairly. In addition, by legally representing the cooperative and overseeing the finances, it protects the interests of the members and ensures long-term sustainability. By encouraging the active participation of members and acting as a mediator in conflicts, she strengthens community cohesion and ensures that all members are involved in decisions that affect the cooperative. Without a well-organized and committed board of directors, the cooperative could face disorganization, internal conflict, or financial problems.

In a housing cooperative, the **Board of Directors** plays a vital role in overseeing the cooperative's operations and ensuring that it functions smoothly and in the best interest of its members. Each board member typically has specific responsibilities and duties that contribute to the overall governance of the co-op. While the exact titles and responsibilities may vary depending on the cooperative's bylaws, here's a breakdown of the typical roles on a Board of Directors:

## **Board Roles**

### **President (President)**

**Main Responsibilities:** The President is the leader of the board of directors and of the cooperative. They are responsible for overseeing board meetings, guiding the strategic direction of the cooperative, and representing the cooperative in relations with external parties (e.g., government agencies, other organizations).

#### **Specific functions:**

- Chair board meetings and ensure meetings are productive and stay on track.
- Setting the agenda for board meetings in collaboration with the other members.

- Ensure that the board's decisions are properly executed.
- Act as a key spokesperson for the cooperative, often in public or with external stakeholders.

- Ensure that the cooperative adheres to its bylaws and guiding principles.

# Vice President

**Main Responsibilities:** The Vice President acts as the President's second-in-command. They are primarily there to step in for the President if the President is unavailable or unable to perform their duties.

**Specific Duties:**

Assisting the President in their duties and responsibilities.

Filling in for the President when they are absent from meetings or unable to perform their duties.

Taking on special projects or initiatives as needed.

Often involved in specific committees or leadership roles within the co-op.

# Secretary

**Main Responsibilities:** The Secretary is responsible for managing the records of the cooperative and ensuring that documentation and communication are properly handled.

**Specific Duties:**

Taking minutes at board meetings and ensuring they are accurately recorded and distributed to members.

Maintaining official records, including meeting minutes, resolutions, and bylaws. Managing official correspondence, including notices of meetings and other important communications with members.

Ensuring compliance with legal requirements related to record-keeping, such as filing annual reports or other required documents with government agencies

## Treasurer:

**Main Responsibilities:** The Treasurer is responsible for overseeing the financial health of the cooperative and ensuring that financial records are accurate and transparent.

### Specific Duties:

Managing the co-op's finances, including creating and monitoring budgets and financial reports.

Overseeing cash flow, ensuring that the cooperative can meet its financial obligations (e.g., mortgage payments, maintenance costs).

Providing financial reports at board meetings and to the membership.

Ensuring proper financial controls are in place to prevent fraud or misuse of funds.

Working with accountants or auditors to ensure proper tax filings and financial audits are conducted.

## Board Member (General Director)

**Main Responsibilities:** General board members (sometimes called directors) are responsible for participating in board decisions and offering input on key matters affecting the cooperative.

### Specific Duties:

Attending and participating in board meetings, making decisions on various issues.

Serving on committees (e.g., maintenance, membership, finance) as needed and providing oversight.

Representing the interests of the cooperative members and ensuring their voices are heard.

Contributing expertise, ideas, and feedback on decisions ranging from policy changes to operational improvements.

## **Committee Members (if applicable)**

### **Main Responsibilities:**

Some cooperatives have specific committees that handle different aspects of the cooperative's operations. These committees are often led by board members but may involve non-board members as well.

### **Specific Duties:**

Serving on specific committees such as the Finance Committee, Maintenance Committee, or Membership Committee.

Participating in research, decision-making, and implementation of committee goals. Bringing specialized knowledge or skills to the committee (e.g., finance, legal, or property management expertise).

Reporting back to the full board on the progress and recommendations of the committee.

### **Member Relations Liaison (if applicable)**

**Main Responsibilities:** In some co-ops, a board member may be specifically assigned to handle member relations, ensuring clear communication

## **Building a Housing Cooperative Through Community, Democracy, and Collaboration**

With housing costs rising in Chicago, forming a housing co-op gives people the power to create community-driven affordable housing. Success comes from strong organization, open communication, and shared decision-making.

### **Assemble a Committed Group**

Look for people who believe in cooperative life and are willing to work for it. Set clear goals and make sure everyone is committed to a democratic process.

### **Create a Fair and Transparent Structure**

Write bylaws that support open communication and fair decision-making. Elect a Board of Directors with a combination of skills and a common commitment to the community. Make sure all members have a say in how the co-op is run.

### **Work Together to Get Property and Financing**

Research potential properties and consider community land trusts. Explore grants, cooperative-friendly lenders, and local associations. It establishes fair financial policies to keep the cooperative sustainable in the long term.

### **Foster Collaboration and Shared Responsibility**

Encourage members to stay involved in meetings, maintenance, and decisions. Implement conflict resolution strategies to keep the community strong. Make sure important decisions are made together, with everyone's participation.

### **Face Challenges as a Team**

**Financing:** Look for lenders and organizations that understand cooperatives.

**Legal Steps:** Get guidance on onboarding and compliance requirements.

**Thinking ahead:** Plan for long-term maintenance and success.



# YOUR PATH TO SECURE COOPERATIVE HOMEOWNERSHIP STARTS HERE



For more information about housing cooperatives, workshops, programs, events and free consultations, please contact us.

Visit us at

<https://resurrectionproject.org/co-op-housing>

Or use the QR code



TRP's mission is to build trusting relationships and empower individuals, immigrants, and families to achieve their social and economic aspirations, stable homes, and equitable participation. Housing cooperatives offer an alternative to traditional homeownership. They empower residents with shared ownership and responsibility in their housing community.



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