

Member rights and responsibilities

Members of a resident-owned community have rights – and responsibilities. Those rights and responsibilities are outlined in the bylaws, in standard parliamentary procedure, and in local, state and federal laws. Most cooperatives' bylaws define a member as a person who is, among other things:

“... willing to accept membership responsibilities, including but not limited to voluntary participation in the governance of the cooperative and in the operation of the community.”

What does this mean? Members' participation in the co-op will ebb and flow, and can be as simple as handing out meeting flyers, or as involved as running for office.

However, members *always* have a responsibility to:

- ✓ hold the board accountable for its actions, including obeying all bylaws and applicable local, state and federal laws
- ✓ pay carrying charges (rent) in full and on time
- ✓ ask good and thoughtful questions at annual meeting
- ✓ stay informed about issues in the community by observing board meetings and reading all co-op correspondence
- ✓ adhere to board-approved policies and procedures, including the meeting code of conduct
- ✓ disclose to the board of directors any conflict of interest with the co-op by completing a conflict-of-interest form
- ✓ vote on matters brought to the membership
- ✓ deliver valid complaints in writing to the board of directors
- ✓ pay the membership fee in full (or per the subscription/membership agreement)
- ✓ obey the community rules
- ✓ treat community members with respect and be a good neighbor
- ✓ ***And, most important, be active in the community, as each member's time and talent allows***

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Additionally, members in good standing always have the right to:

- ✓ be heard at a membership meeting
- ✓ run for office at co-op elections, in accordance with the member-approved bylaws
- ✓ inspect co-op records, in accordance with the member-approved bylaws, except those with personal information about members
- ✓ be given proper notice for all board and member meetings
- ✓ be treated fairly, respectfully and without discrimination
- ✓ have equal access to services
- ✓ deliver a valid petition to the board of directors when/if there is a serious issue to bring to the members for deliberation
- ✓ insist on a fair hearing before an expulsion

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