

# Member selection

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## Purpose of the policy

- To establish a framework for recruiting, receiving and maintaining applications for membership in the co-op
- To establish a framework for accepting new members by applying member selection criteria in a fair and consistent manner
- To provide guidelines for maintaining and managing an external waiting list of pre-approved members
- To establish an equitable and consistent system for allocating units to internal and external members and/or applicants, and
- To make sure that applicants and new members receive a proper orientation and introduction to the co-op.

## Policy

### Applicant list

1. The co-op maintains a file of applications for membership. This file is called the applicant list.
2. The co-op advertises for applications as required, indicating the unit size and maximum housing charges for which the co-op is accepting applications.
3. The co-op will not charge an application fee.
4. Applicants must update information on file with the co-op every 12 months. The co-op will not consider applications that are not updated.
5. Co-op application forms and procedures will conform to the co-op's personal information protection policy.

### Orientation and interviews

6. The co-op may conduct orientation sessions and interviews as needed.

7. 2 or 3 committee members will interview applicants using interview procedures and will bring their results to the full committee.
8. No member may interview or participate in discussions or decisions on any applicant who is a relative or close friend.
9. Using the member selection criteria, the committee will select and recommend applicants per available unit for board approval for membership and unit allocation.
10. The membership committee will make sure that applicants and new members understand the rights and responsibilities of co-op membership.

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11. The co-op will offer a subsidized unit subject to the requirements of the agreement with BC Housing and to the availability of an appropriate subsidy.
12. Applicants must receive positive references from their previous landlord(s) and a credit check rating revealing **no outstanding rent arrears and no history of bad debts or court actions for non-payment** to be eligible for approval as members.
13. Member selection criteria are based on the following:
  - household income and size meet the co-op requirements
  - special needs units are only offered to households who meet the criteria for those units
  - understanding of co-operatives and willingness to participate in the co-op
  - date of application and time on the applicant list
  - skills and experience
  - degree of housing need
  - commitment to co-operation and community living
14. The co-op will make sure that selection criteria and all aspects of the member selection process are applied equitably, consistently and in compliance with human rights laws.

### Internal moves and unit allocation

15. Members who wish to apply for an internal move must notify the board in writing. The board will place their names on an internal waiting list.
16. The membership committee will select, and the co-op will offer, vacant units in the following order of priority to:
  - members on the internal waiting list if there are any
  - members who respond to a posted notice advertising an upcoming vacancy within the timeline provided, and
  - applicants from the applicant list and following the member selection policy..
17. Internal moves will be offered using the following criteria:
  - household income and size meet the co-op requirements and availability of subsidy
  - special needs units are only offered to households who meet the criteria for those units
  - the member is in good financial standing with the co-op for the last 12 months
  - over- and under-housed households
  - date of request and time on the waiting list, and
  - current unit kept in good condition
  - participation in the co-op
18. The board may limit the number and timing of internal moves.
19. Internal moves and unit allocations are approved at the discretion of the board.

Policy approved by general meeting:

Replaces policy dated:

## Procedures needed to carry out this policy

Procedures needed to carry out this policy include the items listed below:

1. Co-op application form to comply with PIPA and ways to maintain security of personal information on applicants and members.
2. Information from **management staff** on income level required.
3. System for collecting, using, filing, sharing and protecting applications and other personal information in compliance with PIPA and PIP policy, and separation of financial information from rest of application form, etc.
4. Establish a database or manual system to manage the applicant list.
5. Interview questions “script” corresponding to the member selection criteria.
6. Interview team package with completed application form and interview questions “script”.
7. Defined list of acceptable proof of income from **management staff (included in co-op application form)** to give to applicants before coming for an interview.
8. Method and responsibility for doing credit and reference checks.
9. Standard format for reporting recommendations to the board.
10. Welcoming and orienting new members: welcome package, buddy system, member handbook, workshops, etc.
11. Member file set-up, once accepted.
12. Internal move request form and waiting list set-up for internal moves.
13. Verify compliance with over- and under-housing policy and subsidy requirements for internal moves.

## Options

### Applicant list

#### **Options: Points #1, #2 and #4**

**The Housing Registry:** The Housing Registry is a centralized database of applicant information for use by co-ops and non-profits ([www.bchousing.org/Housing\\_Registry](http://www.bchousing.org/Housing_Registry)).

If your co-op is using the Registry, make the following changes:

Delete Point #1 and replace with:

1. The co-op will use The Housing Registry as its sole source of applicants for membership for all units. It will not maintain a separate applicant list and file of applications and will refer all applicants to the Registry.

or

1. The co-op will use The Housing Registry as its source of applicants for membership for subsidized units. The co-op will keep its own applicant list and file of applications for market units that it cannot fill from the Registry list.

If your co-op uses The Housing Registry as its sole source of applicants, replace the first sentence in Point #2 with “It advertises for applicants to apply through The Housing Registry to the co-op, as required, indicating the unit size and income level for which the co-op is accepting applications” and delete point #4, as The Housing Registry will handle this.

Or, if your co-op uses both The Housing Registry and its own file of applications for certain types of units, replace the first sentence in Point #2 with “It advertises for applicants to apply to the co-op directly or through The Housing Registry, as required, indicating the unit size and income level for which the co-op is accepting applications”.

#### **Option: Point #2**

Choose the appropriate term – either “income level” or “subsidized or maximum housing charges” – and delete the other.

#### **Options: Point #3**

Delete Point #3 and replace with “The co-operative will charge a one-time application fee of [ \$ # ]”.

If you choose this option, consider that many applicants may not be able to pay fees if they apply to several co-ops. Some co-ops charge the fee only when the applicant comes for an interview.

**Option: Point #4**

Change “12” to any number of months acceptable to your co-op.

External waiting list

Note: Your co-op may prefer to change “waiting list” to “wait list” throughout.

**Option: Points #6 to #10**

If your co-op does not use a system of pre-approved members, delete all of the External waiting list section – Points #6 to 10 and re-number.

**Options: Point #7**

Change “at least three” to another number of pre-approved members.

Choose the appropriate term – either “income level” or “subsidized or maximum housing charges” – and delete the other.

**Option: Point #8**

Change “six months” to another time period for contacting pre-approved members.

**Option: Point #9**

Choose which method is acceptable to your co-op.

**Option: Point #10**

Change the “board” to “membership committee” or designated position.



### Orientation and interviews

#### **Options: Points #11 and #12**

If your co-op does not use a system of pre-approved members, insert a new Point #11 and delete Point #12.

11. The membership committee will interview at least **[two]** **[three]** suitable applicants from the applicant list when a unit comes available. If the co-op has a subsidy available, it will give preference to applicants who need it.

Select one of the numbers in brackets, above.

Delete Point #12 from the sample policy if you use this option.

Delete Point #12 if your co-op does not hold orientation sessions.

#### **Option: Point #12**

Delete Point #12 and replace with “The co-op will invite applicants to an orientation session before they can apply to the co-op. It will give applications out at the session”.

#### **Options: Point #13**

Choose the number of interviewers you want to use and insert a new Point #13 after Point #12:

13. As part of the orientation process, applicants are expected to attend a co-op general meeting **[before]** **[after]** being **[pre-]** approved.



**Options: Point #15**

Replace “two” with another number acceptable to your co-op.

If your co-op does not use a system of pre-approved members, change Point #15 to:

15. Using the member selection criteria, the committee will select and recommend **[two]** applicants per available unit for board approval for membership and unit allocation.

**Option: Point #16**

Delete “pre-approved members” if your co-op does not use a system of pre-approved members.

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**Option: Point #17**

Option for FCHP (ILM) co-ops with a rent supplement from BC Housing and for Homes BC co-ops:

Delete Point #17 and replace it with:

17. The co-op will offer a subsidized unit subject to the requirements of the agreement with BC Housing and to the availability of an appropriate subsidy.

**Option: Point #18**

Delete “no outstanding rent arrears” and replace with “no history of bad debts or court actions for non-payment”.

### **Option: Point #19**

Delete any of the bolded bulleted options and/or add new ones that are acceptable to your co-op.

**Note:**

Some co-ops only use date of application as a criteria and then focus on providing lots of member education and training to new members.

Units for special needs could include wheelchair accessible units, units reserved for households fleeing from domestic violence, units for mobility impaired members, etc.

Household income and size: check your co-op operating agreement to see if there are any requirements for household income and size.

### Internal moves and unit allocation

### **Option: Point #21**

Change “membership committee” to “management staff” or other designated person.

### **Options: Point #22**

If your co-op does not pre-approve members, change “pre-approved members from the external waiting list” to “applicants from the applicant list and following the member selection policy”.

If you have changed the number of points in this policy, check to see if “#24 and #25” refer to the appropriate numbers.

**Option: Point #23**

Delete any of the bolded bulleted options and/or add new ones that are acceptable to your co-op.

**Option: Point #24**

Replace with “There shall be no more than [#] internal moves in a fiscal year.” Insert the number of internal moves acceptable to your co-op.

**Other option**

Option for FCHP (ILM) co-ops with a rent supplement from BC Housing and for Homes BC co-ops. Add a new Point #26:

26. Subsidies may be transferred between units, but the co-op must apply to BC Housing to make the transfer.