

# Hugh Garner Housing Co-operative

A By-law about the Process of becoming a Member  
of the Co-op

## By-law No. 45

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### **Membership Process By-law**

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**This document is available in larger print through the office**

Passed by the Board of Directors on

**2019-08-12**

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**2019-09-17**

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## Article 1: About This By-law

### 1.1 Introduction

This by-law prescribes the process that an applicant must follow in order to become a Member of the co-op. Membership in the co-op should not be taken for granted.

The co-op places a high level of importance on participation and involvement of all Members in the governance and activities of this co-op's community. Our aim is to enable every individual to participate and to be involved in those activities that they are able to do. The goal is to build community, strengthen relationships in the co-op, and increase the safety, security and fellowship possibilities of our community. Our intention is to increase our capacity to satisfy our obligations to co-op principles.

Hugh Garner Housing Co-op provides, through democratic participation of its diverse membership, environmentally sustainable, affordable and safe co-operative housing.

The expectation is that all new Members will support these goals and become Members in Good Standing and meet the commitment to which they agree when signing their application form and when approved for Membership.

Note: For definition of "*Member in Good Standing*", see Occupancy By-law No. 42, Section 3.2

### 1.2 Priority of the By-law

In case of any conflict between this by-law and the Co-op's Occupancy By-law or Organizational By-law, the latter by-laws will prevail.

This By-law repeals, takes the place of, or amends, all other by-laws, policies or resolutions that deal with membership process and participation, including:

- By-law No. 32, Membership Process By-law

### 1.3 Definition of Terms

**Applicant:** A person who has initiated the multi step application process for membership at Hugh Garner Housing Co-op.

**Involvement:** For the purpose of this by-law, Involvement means an actual and concrete contribution to the physical, social, political, and spiritual health of the co-op.

**GMM:** General Members' Meeting, including the Annual General Members' Meeting.

#### **1.4 Government and Other Requirements**

To meet government or other funder requirements, the Appendices of this bylaw can be changed by the Board of Directors without amending this by-law. The Appendices of this bylaw can also be changed by the Board in other ways that do not conflict with this bylaw.

#### **1.5 Confidentiality of Personal Information**

Co-op Members, the Board of Directors, Committees, and Staff have a duty to treat personal information about Members, Staff, and other Co-op business according to the personal information rules in the Co-op's Organizational By-Law & the Co-op's Personal Information Protection Policy. Disclosure of confidential information is serious and may be grounds for removal from the Board of Directors as well as possible eviction.

#### **1.6 Non-Discrimination**

The Co-op will not discriminate against applicants because of:

- race
- ancestry
- place of origin
- ethnic origin
- citizenship
- colour
- creed
- age
- gender
- marital status
- political affinity or activity
- sexual orientation
- family relationship
- physical disability
- conviction for which pardon has been granted or time served
- receipt of public assistance
- for any other reason defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code as a violation of fundamental human rights.

#### **1.7 No Liability**

Anything in the Co-op's by-laws, or any commitment made by an unauthorized person who claims to be authorized by the Co-op will not create liability for the Co-op. The Co-op will not be liable to anyone for:

- a) any error, omission, or mistake concerning the waiting lists;
- b) the allocation of units or subsidy;

- c) the failure to allocate units or subsidy to persons on a waiting list;
- d) any other reason or decision related to Membership.

### 1.8 History of this By-law

Name of Document	Date Approved	Date Repealed or Amended
Membership Policies and Procedures	1983	September 19, 2002
Membership Process By-law, By-law No. 32	September 19, 2002	September 17, 2019
Membership Process By-law, By-law 45	September 17, 2019	

## **Article 2: Applying for Membership**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This article details the process of applying for membership at Hugh Garner Housing Co-op.

### **2.2 Aims of the Application Process**

The aims of the application process include making sure that:

- a) applicants have enough information to decide whether they are interested in living in the Co-op;
- b) the Co-op has enough information to assess the membership application;
- c) applicants fully understand that they will be required to participate in the democratic control of the co-op by attending a set number of General Member's Meetings and/or that they will be required to volunteer time in service to the co-op as a Member of a committee or through involvement in other activities;
- d) applicants are aware of and commit to co-operative values and principles.

### **2.3 Assessing Applicants: Membership Criteria**

Applicants for membership must meet the following requirements:

- a) be able to explain what is unique about co-operative enterprises;
- b) commitment to Co-op values, and principles;
- c) a commitment to participate in Co-op activities and decision making (e.g. members' meetings, committees, the Board, other positions or tasks);
- d) financial responsibility;
- e) indication of permanency or long-term commitment to the Co-op;
- f) likely to be a good resident and a good neighbour who will maintain their homes in good condition and will respect rights of others;
- g) indicate that they can afford the housing charge and agree to not apply for housing charge subsidy for the first four years of membership (see Subsidy Bylaw No. 43R, Section 3.1a);
- h) positive attitude toward living in a community with people from different social groups, classes, economic and cultural backgrounds;

The Co-op will apply these criteria equally to all applicants. Financial and confidential matters are handled by office staff.

## **2.4 Applying Directly to the Co-op**

The application process for co-op membership is a multi step process, as described in Article 3. The multi step process is initiated when the External Waiting List is open or units are available. At all other times, the co-op will not initiate the application process with a potential applicant nor accept any fee or application paperwork from any individual or family.

People applying for membership in the Co-op will apply directly to the co-op by following the multi step application process described in Article 3, below. If the application process is successful but there is no unit available for them, the applicant will be placed on the External Waiting List. The Waiting List By-law explains how the External Waiting List functions.

## **2.5 Internal Applicants (16-year old and over)**

All applicants for Membership must meet the requirements in this by-law. A person living in the co-op who turns 16 years old and who wishes to apply for Membership does not automatically qualify for Membership, nor for a unit. All internal applicants who apply for membership must sign all documents that applicants for membership must sign including waiving the right to subsidy for the first 4 years.

People applying for membership in the Co-op will apply directly to the co-op by following the multi step application process described in Article 3, below. If the application process is successful but there is no unit available for them, the applicant will be placed on the Internal Waiting List. The Waiting List By-law explains how the Internal Waiting List functions. As per the Waiting List By-law, all internal applicants must live in the co-op for a minimum of two years after becoming a Member before applying for re-location.

## **2.6 Referrals from Toronto Social Housing Connections**

The Co-op participates in Toronto Social Housing Connections, a centralized waiting list in Toronto for people applying for housing assistance. A person referred to the Co-op in this way will go through the same membership process as all other applicants.

## Article 3: The Application Process

### 3.1 Introduction

The application process is a multi step process that everyone must complete in order to be accepted as an applicant for membership.

### 3.2 The Multi Step Application Process

**Step 1:** Contact the Co-op office to express an interest in becoming a Member. Then attend an information session hosted by the Membership Committee and other committees. Applicants may bring a translator if needed. After the information session, obtain an application package which will include a copy of this by-law.

**Step 2:** All applicants will be invited to review the major co-op by-laws (Occupancy, Organizational, Waiting List), policies and mission statement. These are available on the co-op website or can be provided in hard copy by the co-op. Applicants should inform themselves about the operations of co-operative enterprises.

**Step 3:** Once all previous steps are complete, the applicant is entitled to submit their application fee and full application package for review. An applicant's package will not be accepted if any of the required forms are missing or incomplete. The package must be signed by all adult household members over the age of 16.

**Step 4:** An applicant has the option to attend a General Members' Meeting and may attend a meeting of one of the applicant's chosen committees as a guest.

**Step 5:** Attend an interview with the Membership Committee (see Section 3.5). Applicants may bring a translator if needed.

**Step 6:** The Board of Directors shall confirm or deny the recommendation. If approved, the applicant will be added to the external waiting list and will be informed by staff.

### 3.3 Income Verification and Landlord Checks

The Co-op will conduct income verifications and landlord checks.

### 3.4 Responsibility for Application Process

No application package nor fee will be accepted by the office until you have attended an information session and completed the first two steps of the process. All responsibility for



completing the application process is that of the applicant. The co-op has no obligation to the applicant.

### **3.5 Interviews and Recommendations**

All applicants and all members of the household aged 16 or over are subject to the application process described in Section 3.2. The Board of Directors and the Membership Committee will set the rules for interviewing applicants. The criteria used to assess suitability for membership is generally described in Section 2.3. The Board of Directors and the Membership Committee have the authority to add to these.

- i) The Membership Committee will conduct the first interview. The committee will forward their recommendation to the Board of Directors. The Membership Committee has the right to request the applicant to attend a follow-up interview if necessary.
- ii) The Board of Directors shall confirm or deny the recommendation.
- iii) If an applicant is not accepted for membership, the applicant may request a second interview (see Section 3.7).

### **3.6 Notice of Non-Acceptance**

The Co-op will inform the applicant in writing whether their application is successful or not. The Co-op is not obligated to provide the reasons for denying an application for membership but may choose to do so if the applicant requests.

### **3.7 Requesting a Second Interview appeal in Case of Non-Acceptance**

An applicant may request a second interview if an application has not been accepted after the interview. To do so, the applicant must give the co-op office a letter saying that they want to request a second interview within 14 days after the postmark date on the letter of non-acceptance.

All applicants who request a second interview will receive a second membership interview before a panel excluding those members who conducted the first interview. It will consist of a Board representative and two different Membership Committee Members. The results of the second interview will be reported directly to the Board of Directors. No other request by an applicant will be allowed.

Based on the results of the second interview, the Board of Directors will make the final decision about accepting or denying an application for membership. The Board's decision is final and

there will be no opportunity for appeal.

### **3.8 Re-application for Membership**

A non-accepted applicant can re-commence the multi step application process two years after an initial rejection if the applicant feels that their circumstances have changed and that they better meet the Co-op's membership criteria. The Membership Committee or Board of Directors may decide not to give an interview to the applicant if the circumstances have not changed. There will be no appeal of the decision of the Board of Directors in this case.

### **3.9 Waiting Lists**

In order to ensure that co-op membership will become increasingly active and engaged moving forward:

- a) All applicants currently on the External Waiting List for membership in the co-op must satisfy the requirements described in this by-law annually in order to remain on the list and retain their place on it. There will be no grandfathering of applicants currently on the list. Upon approval of this by-law all applicants currently on the External Waiting List will be contacted and updated about the new requirements for applicants.
- b) All members on the Internal Waiting List for Relocation must meet the requirements of Good Standing, as defined in the Occupancy Bylaw, in order to remain on the list and retain their place on it. Members who do not satisfy the requirements for Good Standing must do so in order to remain on the Internal Waiting List. They will be removed from the Internal Waiting List unless they take action to fulfil their responsibilities within 1 year of being notified. There will be no grandfathering of members not in Good Standing currently on the Internal Waiting List.