

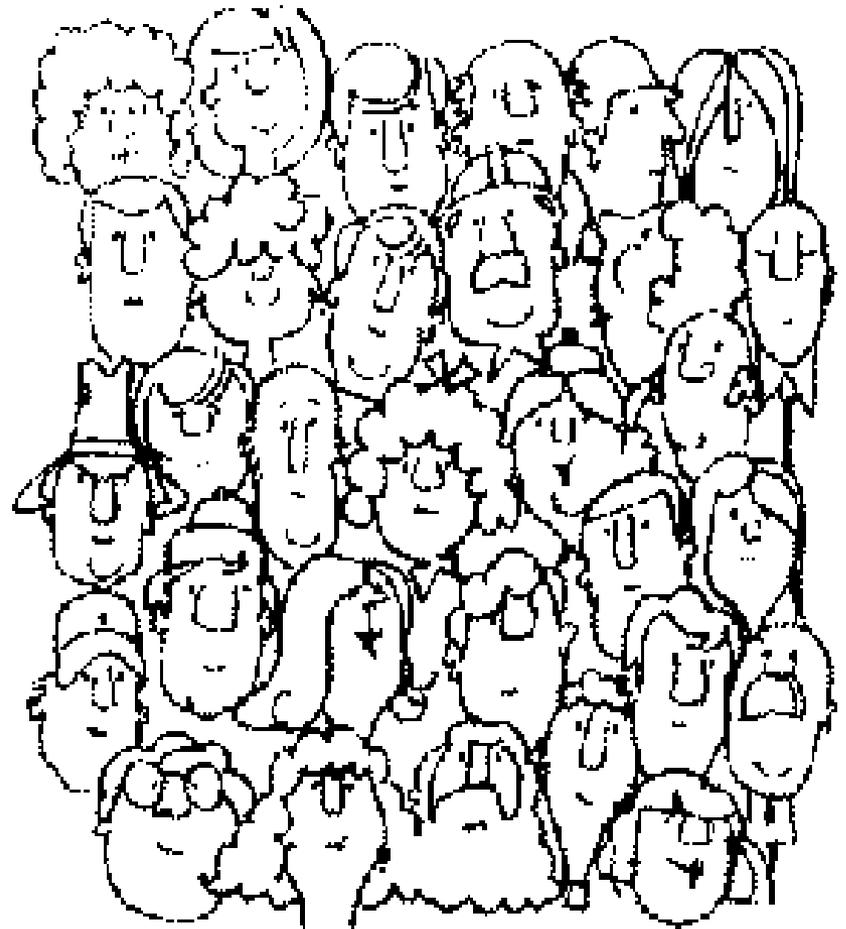
Member Selection Process



Golden Horseshoe Co-operative Housing Federation
Workshop
October 13th, 2011
Kathy Dimassi

The Agenda

- Introductions
- Co-op Principles
- Your Co-op
Mission/Vision/Values
- Marketing
- Getting Started
- Orientation
- Break
- Interview Process
- Recommendation
- Refusals and Appeals
- Integrating New Members
- Evaluation



Co-operative Principles: The Short Version

1. **Open Membership**

Co-ops are open to without exception to anyone who needs their services and freely accepts the obligations of membership.

2. **Democratic Control**

Co-ops are controlled by their members, who together set policy, make decisions and elect leaders who report to them. Each member has one vote.

3. **Economic Participation**

All members contribute fairly to their co-ops, which they own in common. Co-ops pay a limited return (if any) on money people have to invest to become members. Surpluses are held for the future and used to improve the co-op's services.

4. **Independence**

All agreements co-ops sign with outside organizations or governments should leave the members in control of their co-op.

5. **Co-operative Education**

Co-ops offer training to their members, directors and staff. Co-ops tell the public what they are and what they do.

6. **Co-operation among Co-operatives**

Co-ops work through local, national and international structures to serve the members.

7. **Community**

Co-ops are meeting member's needs in ways that build lasting communities inside and outside each co-op.

Mission, Vision & Values



“That’s our new mission statement.”

Marketing



Marketing Plan

- A Marketing Plan is a map to follow to get your desired goal of filling the units.
- Your Marketing Plan should include:
 - Your co-op's strengths and weaknesses
 - Your co-op's target market
 - Information on your co-op's competition
 - Your co-op's plan for advertising
 - Information on incentives you have decided to offer
 - Your application process
 - Your plan to integrate new members



Getting Started



Member Selection Committee

Oath of Confidentiality & Conflict of Interest

Training

Interviews

Human Rights Code

PIPEDA (Personal Information Protection and
Electronic Documents Act)

Application

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"He may have a Ph.D. in elementary particle physics, but he's having an awful lot of trouble with the application form."

What should be on the application:

- Name of each person applying for membership (including children)
- Date of birth for each applicant (including children)
- Current address and telephone number(s)
- Current and previous landlord information (name and phone number)
- Length of stay at last 2 residence
- Income information (source and gross amount of income)
- Social Insurance Number for credit check purposes
- Size of unit required
- Market or subsidy applicant
- Application fee
- References
- Requirements such as accessible or modified

OTHER INFORMATION?

Application Process

- Ensure your applications are readily available during and after office hours
- Enquiries about the co-op should be answered promptly by someone who is knowledgeable about the co-op and the application process
 - Staff person
 - Cold calls
 - Explain what co-ops are
 - Not covered by Residential Tenancies Act
 - NEXT STEP: Orientation
- Complete credit and landlord checks as soon as the application is received
- Set up the interview immediately
- Goal should be to process application within a reasonable time frame (depending on board meetings)

Orientation



Orientation



- Orientation Overview
- Introductions
- Information About the Co-op
- Group Problem Solving
- Questions
- Interviews

Information About The Co-op

- What are co-ops?
 - Co-ops were designed to offer people control over their homes
 - A co-op is owned and managed on a non profit basis by people who live there
 - Co-ops work democratically with residents voting on all important decisions
 - A co-op is home to people from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures
- Am I eligible for subsidize housing?
 - All members of the household must be permanent legal residents of Canada – A Canadian citizen, Landed Immigrant, a Refugee or a Refugee Claimant
 - At least one member of the household must be sixteen years of age or older
 - Former residents of provincially-sponsored rent-geared-to-income housing who have outstanding arrears can be considered only after any outstanding rental arrears from previous tenancy are paid in full or a debt agreement is in place.
- Structure of a co-op
 - In becoming a member of the co-op you are also becoming a member of an organization and a community.
 - Decisions are made by the members of the co-op
 - Much of the work and planning is done by the members as volunteers
 - **General Members Meetings**
 - **Board of Directors**
 - **Staff**
 - **Committees**
 - **By-laws**



Group Problem Solving

Questions

Interviews

- Pet Problems
- Conflict Among Members



Market and RGI applicants

Where do applicants come from:

- Walk ins
- Friends/family
- Advertising
- Centralized Waiting List

Centralized Waiting List:

Know the rules relating to the local priority in your area.

- Special Priority (Victims of Family Violence)
- Health & Safety Applicant
- Homeless Applicant (1 in every 10 vacancies)
- Chronological Applicant

BREAK



Interview Process



Interview Process

The best kind of interview is a conversation where interviewers and applicants feel free to ask questions. Moving into a new home is one of the most significant times in a person's life. This means applicants may be nervous. Interviewers must make the greatest effort to make applicants feel comfortable.

- Describe the basic responsibilities of members
- Ask appropriate and clear questions
(Prepared set as guidelines)
- Wrap up positively
- Declaration Form



Recommendation



Recommendation

A simple format works best.

Applicant A (John & Jane Doe)
Interviewed by: Joe and Sue

List any comments, items that stuck out about the couple, good or bad. If there are any concerns discuss them.

MOTION by ____ Seconded by ____ to approve applicant. **CARRIED**

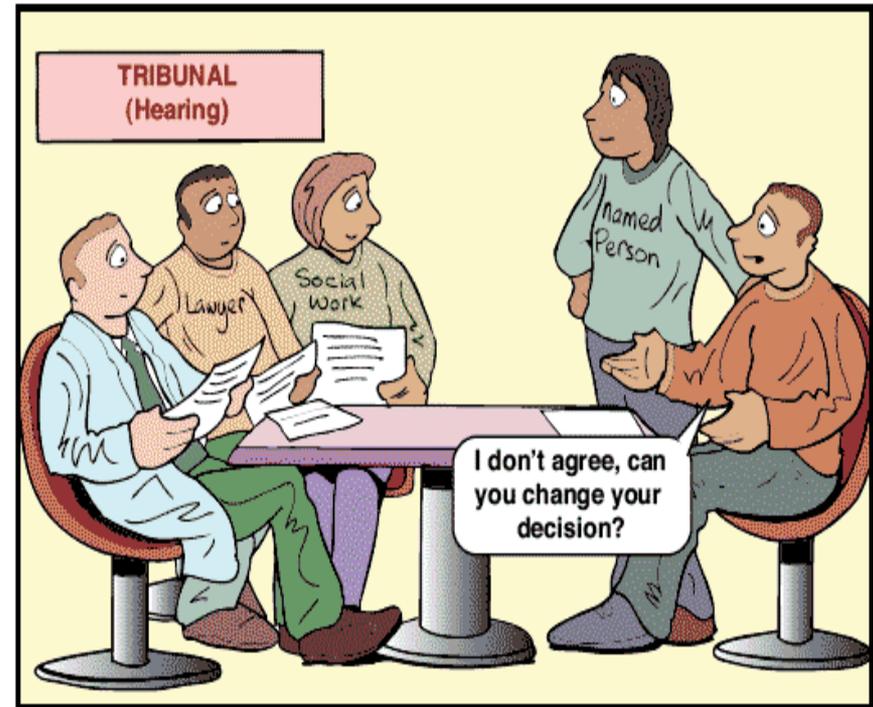


Refusals and Appeals



Refusals

- All non profit housing providers and co-operatives under the SHRA may refuse an applicant accommodations as per the reasons outlined in Ontario Regulations 339/01 Section 18.
 - a) selection of the household is contrary to its mandate
 - b) The housing provider has reasonable grounds to believe, based on the household's rental history, that the household may fail to fulfill the obligation to pay rent for the unit in the amount and at the time it is due
 - c) The household does not agree to accept its responsibilities as a member of the housing provider, if the housing provider is a non profit housing co-operative or the housing provider has reasonable grounds to believe that the household will not accept or will be unable to accept those responsibilities
 - d) In the case of a unit in which individuals will reside in a shared living situation, the housing provider has reasonable grounds to believe that it is unreasonable for the household to reside in share accommodation
 - e) The housing provider has reasonable grounds to believe that the unit is not suitable for the household due to physical characteristics of the unit in relation to the member, gender and ages of the members of the household; or
 - f) In the case of special needs housing, the level of service required by the household is significantly greater or significantly less than the level of service provided to a household in the unit.



Refusals

- Federally funded co-ops do not have to follow these regulations; however, it demonstrates good governance to have reasonable grounds to refuse an applicant.
- If you are refusing an applicant you should have a valid reason.
- Refer to the reasons a housing provider may refuse an applicant as outlined in your current by-laws.
- The Member Selection Committee will forward their recommendations to the Board of Directors.
- Provide a copy of the interview questions/answers for the board so they can see how you came to your decision.
- The Board will base its decision on the committee's recommendations, as well as, the results of the applicant's credit/landlord history check.

Appeals

- A housing provider who refuses to offer a unit to an applicant should notify the applicant in writing of the refusal.
- The letter should also state the applicant has a right to appeal the decision providing details of how to appeal.
- Requests to appeal must be received within 10 business days after the notice of refusal was given.
- An applicant can withdraw their appeal request by giving written notice to the co-op.
- In the event of an appeal, the co-op can offer a second interview.
- Two people who have not had any input with the initial decision should conduct the second interview.
- It may be a good idea to team up with another co-op to complete appeals.
- Have a second interview questionnaire with a mix of old and new questions.
- Once the second interview has been completed, the interviewers will make their recommendations.
- The Board of Directors will still have the final say. If the decision is still to refuse membership, then that decision is final. There is no further appeal process.
- A letter will be sent to the applicant advising them of the outcome.
- For SHRA applicants specific deadlines must be followed and documentation submitted to the Centralized Waiting List

Integrating New Members



Integrating New Members

Filling the unit is not the end of the Co-op's search for good members.

- Member Handbook/By-law Binder
- Information on where to put garbage, recycling, etc.
- Information on laundry facilities
- Information on the staff and office hours
- Information on Parking
- Who to contact in case of Emergency



A good member selection process....

- Avoids vacancy loss
- Treats applicants fairly and respects their human rights
- Follows the SHRA (HSA) rules
- Is easy to administer
- Is flexible
- Gives information about co-op living to the applicants
- Supports the co-op principles of open membership

How does your co-op measure up?

Evaluation

- Feedback is Important
- Reference Material
 - CHF Canada
 - Model SHRA By-law
 - Model Membership Approval By-law
 - Downloading details #23 - Downloading and Member Selection
 - Downloading details #14 – How to refuse RGI and Special Needs Applicants
 - Newsbriefs - May 2007 - A Better Way to Choose Members for your co-ops?
 - GH CHF and CHF Canada workshops