

This policy describes two levels of affiliation with CoHo Ecovillage--Friends of CoHo and Associate Members. These categories are open to non-owner/non-residents who want to maintain ongoing connections with CoHo through regular involvement in community life. The vision is to create and maintain meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships with those outside our on-site community.

Needs

- **Connection.** Enlarges the CoHo family and gives non-owner/non-residents ways to more fully engage with CoHo.
- **Contribution.** Provides channels for Friends of CoHo and Associate Members to contribute time, energy, and resources to community projects.
- **Clarity.** Clearly defines responsibilities and rights of Associate Members and Friends of CoHo.
- **Trust.** Facilitates the development of trust and safety through regular ongoing contact and increases comfort with sharing CoHo community resources.
- **Ease.** Allows Associate Members interested in buying a CoHo unit "someday" to be closely connected to the community now and thus to be ready to buy when a unit opens up, leading to a smoother transition for sellers, buyers and CoHo.
- **Security.** If financial problems resulted in a foreclosure or sale, enables sellers to become Associate Members and maintain their close ties to CoHo.

Vision and Values, Purpose Statement¹

This Affiliates Policy supports our community values of:

- **Sharing Our Lives.** Friends of CoHo and Associate Members are part of the CoHo family, sharing in our lives on an ongoing basis. Former residents can also maintain a closer connection to CoHo, so they can belong for a lifetime through changing circumstances.
- **Safety and Trust.** Facilitates communication and shared expectations between CoHo and frequent visitors.
- **A Diverse Community.** Friends of CoHo and Associate Members enlarge our circle, including people with diverse backgrounds (including income level) and perspectives.
- **Being a Part of the Larger Community.** Welcoming folks as Friends of CoHo and Associate Members is part of our outreach to the greater community and creates a stronger link between CoHo and other Corvallis residents.
- **Purpose Statement/Enrich Our Lives and Refresh Our Spirits Through Connection and Cooperation.** Connections are expanded to include a wider circle of folks interested in cooperative living.
- **Purpose Statement/Share the Power of Community.** Affiliates help spread awareness of cohousing and community-oriented lifestyles.

¹ See AffiliatesGuidelines (see most current version) Appendix C: Links to Themes From Long-Range Planning Process for more background on how Affiliate programs link to our priorities.

Facts

- In 2006, a Friends of CoHo Policy was adopted by consensus. Friends of CoHo application fees and annual payments went to the membership organization CoHo Ecovillage.
- In 2007, the CoHo Cohousing Condominium Association was formed and residents began moving on-site.
- In 2010, CoHoTopia, a nonprofit organization, was formed to create an umbrella entity that is legally and financially separate from the Home Owners Association. The CoHoTopia Bylaws include a provision for establishing categories of nonvoting membership and determining obligations and privileges of members in those categories.
- Friends of CoHo and Associate Members are not members of the CoHo HOA because they do not own units at CoHo. Friends of CoHo and Associate Members are nonvoting members of CoHoTopia.
- This policy combines the revision of the Friends of CoHo Policy which was created and initially approved in 2006 and the creation of a new policy for Associate Members. This Affiliates Policy covers both categories of affiliation--Friends of CoHo and Associate Members.

History

- CoHo had an Associate Member category early in its development (quoting from a 2003 document: "Associate Membership--This avenue is appropriate for people who have decided not to live in CoHo but want to participate, have not yet decided or are seeking the funds to buy into CoHo.") This Associate Member category did not continue past move-in.
- The Friends of CoHo category was initially established to maintain connection with folks who intersected with CoHo during the development phase, but were unable to or chose not to purchase a unit and live on-site. Others learned about the community and desired to be a part of our network. Later, folks who lived on-site and then moved were included as Friends of CoHo.
- Over time, some Friends of CoHo became "close" Friends of CoHo through regular involvement in community life (they were sometimes called "Building 10 Neighbors"), others had less contact, and the majority were not active at all.
- Three years after move-in, the Neighbors Team began to explore the option of another affiliation category, Associate Members, for those who wanted a deeper connection to our community. Part of the impetus was the desire for more outreach and community connections that surfaced in our first long-range planning process conducted in 2010 and 2011. Associate Member programs in other cohousing communities were researched.
- In discussing possible Associate Member category rights/responsibilities, a parallel discussion of Friends of CoHo rights/responsibilities unfolded and so a revision of the 2006 Friends of CoHo policy was undertaken.
- A 2-person ad hoc team (one member of the Neighbors Team, Susan Hyne, and a "close" Friend of CoHo, Janelle Lohr) formed to explore the concept further, generate documents, and move through the community consensus process.

- The updating of the Friends of CoHo program and the creation of the Associate Member program prompted updating and streamlining of preexisting documents on Owner/Members and Resident Non-Owners (Renters). For greater clarity, CoHoMembershipGuidelines (see most current version) was generated and is now the master source for information on application steps, responsibilities, and rights for Owners, Non-Resident Owners, Resident Non-Owners, Associate Members, and Friends of CoHo.

Policy

The intention of this policy is to outline the two categories of affiliation with CoHo Ecovillage in order to offer options to folks wanting different levels of connection. In accordance with CoHo policy, a general overview is provided in this policy document and specific details are listed in the AffiliatesGuidelines document.

Files with explanatory information, application forms, and agreement forms for Friends of CoHo and Associate Members are posted on our CoHo Ecovillage website.

In recognition of the desire to increase diversity (including income diversity), flexibility in the amount of application fees and dues is available by contacting the Membership Team (for Associate Members) and the Neighbors Team (for Friends of CoHo).

Friends of CoHo

In general, features are added to the Friends of CoHo category to increase connection-building opportunities (such as having a buddy, and posting bios/photos of Friends on our internal Tiki website).

The Friends of CoHo dues structure is set up with a base annual amount per household plus an additional annual amount per adult for those who opt to join the meal program (i.e. be on the meal software). Friends of CoHo who opt not to join the meal program can still come to community meals as guests of Members or Associate Members.

Friends of CoHo are nonvoting members of CoHoTopia and their application fees and annual dues are paid to CoHoTopia.

Friends of CoHo dues are paid to support the community and not for use of the facilities.

To provide flexibility and the ability to respond to specific requests, Friends of CoHo can request expansion of their rights and responsibilities by working out an agreement with the Neighbors Team.

Associate Members

Based on the experience of other cohousing communities with successful affiliate programs² (including Pioneer Cohousing from which we adopted the concept of the HUB), several features are included in our Associate Member category:

- An application process that takes enough time to enable owners to connect with prospective Associate Members (FYI: CoHo's membership process for potential owners initially took 12 weeks, then was changed to 8, then shortened further as we got closer to move-in).

² See AffiliatesGuidelines (see most current version) Appendix B: Research on Associate Member Programs at Other Cohousing Communities

- Open, ongoing communication with prospective Associate Members during the application process (via conversations with community members, buddies, at least one Clearness Committee, and assistance from Conflict Prevention Resolution Team if needed). Community members with concerns about prospective Associate Member(s) are asked to use these channels to share their feedback and work toward a resolution.
- Acceptance into the community as Associate Members by consensus of CoHoTopia voting members and CoHoTopia nonvoting members who are Associate Members at a community or business meeting (after completion of application steps and at least one Clearness Committee)
- Full participation in community life, but cannot vote on legal and financial matters and cannot formally block a consensus decision
- Workshare expectation that is less than expectation for on-site owners/renters
- Monthly dues paid to CoHoTopia as part of ongoing support of the community and not for use of the facilities ADDITION
- Option to customize agreement to meet needs of Associate Members and the community
- A process for either the community or an Associate Member to end Associate Member membership
- Participation in an exit process when Associate Members end their membership
- A cap on the number of Associate Member households the community will accept

In general, the application process and the rights/responsibilities for Associate Members are designed to parallel what is expected of unit owners. This high level of commitment and contribution is a factor in designating more rights and responsibilities for Associate Members than for Friends of CoHo.

Through dues, Associate Members are paying membership fees for the opportunity to be an active member of the community and have access to community events. Both intangible and tangible factors are taken into consideration in setting Associate Member dues during the annual budgeting process.

For various reasons, folks desiring to become Associate Members could first become Friends of CoHo and then undertake the Associate Member membership process later.

For greater logistic and scheduling ease, the community may establish set times when folks can start the Associate Member application process. This would streamline the process of orienting, training (NVC and consensus), and welcoming new members of the community and keep the additional workload for community members manageable.

Related Documents

See the most recent versions of these documents (dates omitted to avoid frequent revision of this document when related documents are updated)

CoHoMembershipGuidelines

AffiliatesGuidelines (includes detailed appendices)

FriendsofCoHoPaperwork (information posted on our public website)

AssociateMembersPaperwork (information posted on our public website)

Revision History

The Friends of CoHo policy was created and initially approved 20061217.

The Friends of CoHo policy was revised and incorporated with information on Associate Members into this new Affiliates policy which was adopted by consensus 20110918.

This policy was revised slightly in 20121021 as part of an update and alignment of membership documents.

This policy was revised slightly 20130801 to bring it in alignment with the new policy on the use of CoHo's workshop.