

Background Information

This policy describes two levels of affiliation with CoHo Ecovillage – Friends of CoHo and Associate Members. The vision in offering these two affiliation levels is to create and maintain meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships with those outside our on-site community. These categories are open to non-owner/non-residents who want to maintain ongoing connections with CoHo through regular involvement in community life. Associate Member affiliation has proven to be a welcome option for former owners who still wish to continue their close ties to the CoHo community.

Policy

The intention of this policy is to outline the two categories of affiliation with CoHo Ecovillage – Friends of CoHo and Associate Members – in order to offer options to people wanting different levels of connection.

Files with explanatory information and application forms (including rights and responsibilities) for Friends of CoHo and Associate Members are posted on our CoHo Ecovillage website.

In recognition of the desire to increase community 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, the Friends of CoHo category has features that have been included to increase connection-building opportunities such as having a buddy and sharing bios with the community, and involving Friends in work parties, the meal program, social events and teams, as interested.

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

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.

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

Extensive research on the the experience of other cohousing communities with successful affiliate programs informed this affiliate category. The CoHo Associate Member affiliate option includes the following features:

- An application process that takes enough time to enable owners to connect with prospective Associate Members. The Membership Team will work with former owners changing to Associate Membership status on adapting the application process.
- 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 CoHo conflict resolution processes 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). This step is skipped if the application is from an owner transitioning to Associate Member status.
- Full participation in community life, including consensus decision-making, with the exception that Associate Members cannot vote on legal and financial matters and cannot formally block a consensus decision.
- The expectation is that Associate Members will participate as fully as possible in many aspects of CoHo life, including assisting with the work of the community through participation in work parties and on teams. Please refer to our “Participation in CoHo” document for a more in-depth discussion of the importance of community participation.
- Monthly dues paid to CoHoTopia as part of ongoing support of the community and not for use of the facilities.
- 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, providing pertinent training, and welcoming new members of the community and keep the additional workload for community members manageable.

Needs Met by this Policy

- **Connection.** Enlarges the CoHo community 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.
- **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 changing life circumstances result in a unit sale, enables sellers to become Associate Members and maintain their close ties to CoHo.

Vision and Values, Purpose Statement

This Affiliates Policy supports our community values of:

- **Sharing Our Lives.** Friends of CoHo and Associate Members are part of the CoHo community, 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.

History

- The Friends of CoHo category was initially established to maintain connection with folks who were involved 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 had lived on-site and then moved were included as Friends of CoHo.
- 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.

- A 2-person ad hoc team (a member of the Neighbors Team and a Friend of CoHo) formed to explore the concept further, generate documents, and move a proposal through the community consensus process. This policy is the result of their work.

Related Documents

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

- FriendsofCoHoPaperwork (information posted on our public website)
- AssociateMembersPaperwork (information posted on our public website)
- Participation in CoHo document

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.

This policy was revised slightly 20180709 to update the policy and to format it in such a way that the policy information is more prominent in the document.

In 2023 this policy was revised, editing for clarity and brevity, and updated with new documents and current practices. No substantive changes were made. The updated policy was submitted to the community for comment/concerns. The policy was declared approved on 20230830.