

OLD GRACE HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE

FRIENDS AND MEMBERS APPLICATION POLICY

The policy presented here outlines how individuals can apply to become Friends of OGHC, how they can subsequently become members of Old Grace Housing Co-op, and the role the Membership Committee plays in implementation.

1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

- a. Old Grace Housing Co-operative operates in accordance with the International Co-operative Alliance's Principles, including the principle of *Voluntary and Open Membership*. The only grounds for refusing an application to join the co-op are that the applicant does not meet the criteria to become a Friend of OGHC.
- b. Individuals who agree with the Vision, Mission and Principles of Old Grace Housing Co-operative can demonstrate their support by applying to become Friends of OGHC. If couples wish to join the co-op, both must do so as individuals.
- c. Friends of OGHC who wish to become future co-op residents are eligible to have their names added to the co-op's Wait List for Suites. However, it is not necessary for Friends of OGHC to apply for a suite if they have no intention of living in the co-op – a situation that might apply to long-standing co-op supporters or to relatives of co-op members.
- d. If Friends of OGHC do want their names added to the Wait List for Suites, they must give the Membership Committee additional information about the size and composition of their household. They should download and complete the *Wait List Application Form* and send this to the Membership Committee (see the *OGHC Wait List and Suite Allocation Policy* for more details).
- e. Each Friend of OGHC receives co-op communications and is invited to some co-op meetings and events. However, Friends of OGHC have no vote in decision-making.
- f. To become a voting member of Old Grace Housing Co-operative, an applicant must meet the Membership Qualifications and occupy a housing unit owned or controlled by the co-op (see Sections 6.01 and 6.02 of the *OGHC By-laws*). Any adult living in the household who is not already a Friend of OGHC will be required to join before becoming an occupant.
- g. Information collected by the Membership Committee from individuals applying to become Friends of OGHC is protected by federal and provincial Protection of Personal Information legislation and will remain confidential at all times.

2. DEFINITIONS

Friend of OGHC: a person who wishes to show support for Old Grace Housing Co-operative. Friends of OGHC are eligible to submit a *Wait List Application Form* giving the co-op information about their housing needs. Their names will then be added to the co-op's Wait List for Suites.

Co-op Number: A number assigned to a Friend of OGHC based on date of joining the co-op. The Co-op Number is assigned to an individual, not to couples or households. An individual's Co-op Number remains with them until they completely withdraw from the co-op. The Co-op Number is used to determine

applicant priority on the Wait List for Suites as well as priority for other co-op facilities or services, such as parking.

Deposit: a one-time fee paid when an individual applies to become a Friend of OGHC. The Deposit is fully refundable should the Friend choose to withdraw from the co-op at a later date. The amount is set by the Board of Directors and can be changed at its discretion. When the Friend accepts an available suite, his/her Deposit is converted into 1 Member Share. Additional Member Shares must be purchased before occupying the suite, depending on its type and size.

Member of OGHC: an individual who is a Friend of OGHC, has been approved to occupy an available co-op suite, and has paid for all the Member Shares required (see *OGHC By-law 6.01*). The member must sign the co-op's *Occupancy Agreement* before moving into the suite.

3. ADMINISTRATION:

- a. The OGHC board of directors has delegated responsibility for implementing the *Friends and Members Application Policy* and the *Wait List and Suite Allocation Policy* to the co-op Membership Committee, which is a standing Advisory Committee to the board. The Terms of Reference of the Membership Committee are approved by the board.
- b. In relation to implementing these two policies, the Membership Committee will:
 - ensure that all information posted on the OGHC website about joining the co-op (as a Friend of OGHC, and as co-op member in future) is accurate and current.
 - respond to public requests for information about the co-op, the process for becoming a Friend of OGHC, and how a Friend of OGHC can apply for a co-op suite.
 - receive, process and retain applications from individuals wishing to become Friends of OGHC; forward Deposit payments to the co-op bookkeeper; assign Co-op Numbers.
 - receive, process and retain *Wait List Application Forms* from Friends who wish to become future co-op residents; maintain the co-op's Wait List for Suites, and update this at least annually
 - allocate available co-op suites to eligible applicants for housing (see *Wait List and Suite Allocation Policy* for details).
 - receive, process and retain *Suite Application Forms* submitted by applicants for available suites; verify applicant eligibility as necessary (household size, household income); recommend acceptance or rejection of applicants to the board of directors.
 - maintain and regularly update the co-op's Friend and Member databases to ensure contact information is current.

4. CRITERIA TO BECOME A FRIEND OF OGHC:

In order to become a Friend of OGHC, a person must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Be 18 years of age or older.
- 2) Agree with the general principles of the co-operative movement and those which apply specifically to Old Grace Housing Co-operative.
- 3) Agree with the Vision, Mission and Principles of Old Grace Housing Co-operative and support the principle of consensus decision-making.
- 4) Have a positive attitude to living in a community with people from different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds.

- 5) Agree to treat other Friends of OGHC and co-op members with respect at all times.
- 6) Pay the one-time, refundable fee (referred to as a Deposit).

5. PROCEDURE TO BECOME A FRIEND OF OGHC

- a. Individuals who are not co-op residents, but who were Interim Members on 4 November 2017, automatically became Friends of OGHC on that date. They were not required to submit another application or to pay another fee.
- b. Since that date, individuals wishing to join Old Grace Housing Co-operative must complete the *Application to Become a Friend of OGHC*. This form can be submitted online, from the OGHC website, or by mail.
- c. The application must be accompanied by the required Deposit, which can be paid by cheque or electronic transfer.
- d. The Membership Committee will record the Friend's contact information in the OGHC database and assign that individual a Co-op Number based on the date their application was received.
- e. Applications submitted online are automatically dated. An application received by mail will be dated by the co-op representative who first receives it. If the Deposit is received within two calendar weeks, the date the application was received will be used to determine Co-op Number. If the Deposit is received after this, the date of payment will apply. If no payment is received within 30 days, the application to join OGHC will be cancelled.
- f. The Membership Committee will send a welcome e-mail/letter confirming the applicant's status as a Friend of OGHC. Friends who are interested in becoming future co-op members will be asked to complete and submit a *Wait List Application Form*. The Membership Committee will review the application for completeness, then add the individual's name to the co-op's Wait List for Suites.

6. CEASING TO BE A FRIEND OF OGHC

- a. A Friend of OGHC may withdraw from the co-op at any time. The Friend may ask to have their Deposit refunded or may donate the money to a co-op project of their choice.
- b. Withdrawing from the co-op cancels any application that the Friend has previously made for a co-op suite.
- c. If a Friend of OGHC who has withdrawn decides to re-join the co-op at a later date, they must re-apply and pay the deposit required at that time. They will be assigned a new Co-op Number based on the date they re-join. This condition will apply equally to those who requested a refund of their Deposit and those who chose to donate it to a co-op project.

7. CRITERIA TO BECOME A MEMBER OF OGHC

- a. A Friend of OGHC becomes a co-op member when he/she is allocated a co-op suite, pays the required Member Shares, and signs the *OGHC Offering Statement*.
- b. The member(s) must sign the co-op's *Occupancy Agreement* and make arrangements to pay their monthly housing charges before moving into the suite.

8. PROCEDURE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF OGHC

- a. The procedure followed by the Membership Committee in allocating available suites is described in the *OGHC Wait List and Suite Allocation Policy*.

- b. Each individual co-op member has one vote in decision-making. All intended occupants of an allocated suite, who are over 18 years of age, and who are not dependents, are expected to become co-op members before moving into the co-op. They do this by completing their own application to become a Friend of OGHC and paying their own Deposit. They become voting co-op members when they sign the co-op's *Occupancy Agreement* and move into their suite.
- c. A suite occupant who is over 18 years of age but is a dependent (eg. currently a student) may live with the member(s) as a long-term guest. The rights and responsibilities of long-term guests are described in Article 8.4 of the *OGHC Occupancy Rules*. A *Long-term Guest Agreement* will be signed by the co-op member(s) and the dependent, at the same time as the *Occupancy Agreement* is signed.
- d. If a Friend's suite application is withdrawn at any point in the process, any monies paid to that date will be fully refunded. The individual can remain a Friend of OGHC, and stay on the Wait List for Suites, unless he/she wishes to withdraw completely from the co-op.

9. CEASING TO BE A MEMBER OF OGHC

Information on how members of Old Grace Housing Co-op can withdraw from the co-op and move out of their suite is provided in Article 10 of the *OGHC Occupancy Rules*.