

## What You Need to Know About Membership

### **Are there rules governing the co-op?**

The Bylaws of Urban Greens lay out the rules that govern the co-op. We encourage all members to carefully read and familiarize themselves with the Bylaws. The Bylaws are a living document, meant to reflect the needs of our cooperative. Should you have any questions or suggestions for changes, please let us know.

Below is a summary of some of the key points members should know. We do not intend for this to replace your reading of the Bylaws, but instead it should be a helpful reference that can point you to specific portions of the Bylaws for further information.

### **Membership Eligibility, Rights and Responsibilities**

#### **Who is eligible to become a member?** (Section 2.1)

Any individual, household, or organization that wants to utilize the services of the Co-op and accept the responsibilities of ownership is eligible to become a member.

#### **How do you become a member?** (Section 2.1)

All that is required is to fill out an application and purchase a share. That's it! The price per share differs, depending on your income. The co-op can work with you to create payment plans. Upon your first payment, you become a member.

#### **After becoming a member, what are your *rights and responsibilities* as a member of Urban Greens?** (Sections 2.2 & 2.3)

You have the right to buy groceries and produce from the co-op. Members also have the right to work for the co-op and possibly earn discounts on purchases. This right to work may be limited by the onset of other responsibilities, such as becoming a Council Member or an Officer.

Members have the right to elect members to the council, the leadership body of the co-op. Members have the power to amend the by-laws and call meetings to vote on any business. Members are responsible for keeping up with payments, if you are paying for your membership through a payment plan. Members are also responsible for buying from the co-op, at least occasionally. Members must notify the co-op of any changes in one's name and/or address.

### **Meetings of the Members**

#### **What types of meetings are members entitled to attend?** (Sections 3.1 & 3.2)

The co-op holds two types of meetings: annual meetings and special meetings.

The annual meeting occurs 90 days after the close of each fiscal year. At the annual meeting, we discuss general business of the co-op, including operations and finances, policy decisions, review of past and future programs and goals. Members may vote on particular issues at this meeting. Council members are elected during this meeting.

Special meetings may be called by the co-op council at any time. Members may also call for a special meeting. To do so, fifteen percent of the total number of members must sign a petition calling for a special meeting. The petition must state the business that the members want to bring up at the meeting. The chairperson of the council must call a meeting as soon as possible after s/he receives the petition. You should note that matters that come up during the meeting that have not been specified in the petition will not be considered binding, but will only be advisory. Decisions on matters specified in the petition will be binding.

**How many votes does a member receive?** (Section 3.7)

Each member has one vote no matter how many shares that member owns. All members have the right and responsibility to vote in the best interest of the co-op.

**How do members make binding decisions?** (Section 3.6)

In order to have a binding vote on a matter, the co-op must meet *quorum*, which means that at least 50 owners must vote on a matter (mail and email ballots count towards the quorum).

**How can I vote?** (Sections 3.8 & 3.9)

Members have the opportunity to vote through several methods. Members may be present at the meeting or can vote by mail or email. The notice of the meeting will give instructions for voting by mail or email.

**Ways for Members to Get More Involved:  
Become a Council Member or Run for Office!**

**What is the council?** (Section 4.1)

Collectively responsible for the general welfare of the co-op, the council is made up of members elected by the general membership. The council focuses on the mission of the co-op and ensures that the co-op is on track with its goals. The council consists of 13 members. Council members serve a three-year term.

**Who is eligible to be on the council?** (Section 4.2)

Any member who is over 18 years old may run for a position on the council.

**What officer positions does the co-op have?** (Sections 6.1 - 6.3)

The officer positions are chair, vice chair, treasurer and secretary. The council may designate more as needed. The council elects the officers at the annual meeting. Terms vary depending on the position.

**Things may change in my life. Once I am a member, am I bound to the co-op forever?** (Section 7.3)

No. Members have the option to terminate their ownership and redeem their shares. (But, why would you choose to do that once you sign on to enjoy all the benefits of Urban Greens!)