

Midwest Association of Housing Cooperative



Board Candidates

Our Mission Statement

To support and champion the cause of quality housing through education, legislative actions, partnership, and advocacy for housing cooperatives.

Legal Requirements for Boards of Directors

Many people wonder why organizations are structured to include boards. The answers are both practical and legal. A board provides one part of a system of checks and balances. An organization announces its intention to be overseen by an independent body when it incorporates. In essence, the board "owns" the organization and can be held legally accountable for all organizational actions. The board is responsible for developing policy and providing direction to the executive director and/or office manager. As the governing body, the board ensures that the organization is acting within the parameters set by the articles of incorporation and the bylaws. The policies developed by the board are as legally binding as the articles and bylaws. Board members often carry extra insurance purchased through the organization to protect them from unforeseen legal problems.

What Skills Does Your Board Need?

The jobs of a nonprofit board of directors include:

- Providing long-term planning assistance and program oversight, and developing organizational policy
- Monitoring the fiscal and legal health of the organization
- Raising funds
- Assisting with marketing and public relations
- Selecting and evaluating the Staff.
- Developing personnel policies

Boards of Directors' Responsibilities

MAHC Board of directors has a number of responsibilities to the organization they serve. These responsibilities may include the following.

- ***Vision and Planning.*** The board works with the executive director and/or office manager, and possibly other staff, to create a vision and mission for the organization, as well as setting a plan for its future. Plans are reviewed regularly and altered when needed.
- ***Development of Policy.*** A major task of the board is the development of organizational policy. With policy in place, the staff is free to pursue the goals of the organization and to provide service to its Members.
- ***Supervision of the Executive Director and/or Office Manager.*** Most boards search for, hire, and evaluate the executive of the organization. Beyond those tasks, it is the job of the board to support the executive director and/or office manager in her/his work for the organization.
- ***Funding Leadership.*** Organizations may assume it is the job of the executive director and/or office manager to raise funds. It is actually the joint task of the board and the executive to raise the funds necessary to support the organization.
- ***Financial Oversight.*** Responsibility for budget oversight balances the responsibility of raising funds. Boards offer an impartial body that can review the organization's expenditures and income from month to month, as well as presiding over annual audits.
- ***Self-Assessment.*** Boards need to conduct self-critiques to determine their effectiveness. A yearly review of activities and functions is useful.
- ***Planning and Implementing Public Relations.*** As community members, the board is the ideal body to create and carry out a strategy for ensuring that the organization is visible to and is viewed favorably by the community it serves.

Fulfilling all of these responsibilities is a time-consuming process. Board members must not only have a commitment to the organizational values and goals, but must also have the time and energy necessary to effectively lead the organization. An active, well focused board can help ensure the success and long-term stability of the MAHC organization.

A sample list of an individual board member's responsibilities follows:

- Attend regularly scheduled board meetings
- Review minutes and stay well-informed regarding the organization's fiscal and program work
- Participate in setting overall policy and program oversight
- Participate in the performance evaluation of the executive director and/or office manager
- Participate actively on at least one committee of the organization
- Actively raise funds for the organization by direct contact with current and prospective donors, including personal friends and colleagues, with assistance from staff
- Actively participate, once a year, in an annual planning retreat
- Contribute annually from personal resources to the extent of capacity
- Speak on behalf of MAHC to the community
- Avoid conflicts of interests

Being a board member means more than just showing up at meetings; it involves being well- informed and asking difficult questions, participating in planning and policy making, ensuring a sound financial footing, and monitoring and evaluating the management and governance of the organization

Meeting Dates

July 12 - 14 2019

September 13 – 14, 2019

November 9, 2019

February 14 - 15 2020

History of MAHC

First Meetings

1963 Cadillac Hotel, Detroit, Michigan 13 or 14 people from that many Cooperatives met to be heard. Many cooperatives had not reached endorsement stage but had many unanswered questions. Decided no formal organization, but established Newsletter with Do's and Don't's of running the day-to-day operation within the housing cooperative.

First Conference

1963, Cobo Hall, Detroit, Michigan. Two meetings held and the suggestion for a formal organization came forth -- MAHC --the Michigan Association of Housing Cooperatives. Overwhelming response by cooperators to create a formal organization to represent people.

MAHC the early years

In early 1964, the Foundation for Cooperative Housing, FCH, became involved in the Michigan Association of Housing Cooperatives. The Michigan Association had little difficulty securing and maintaining a membership since FCH would build Association dues directly into new cooperative's initial budgets.

The first few years were dominated by FCH involvement; in 1971 the situation was changed through the efforts of various co-op boards. An active campaign resulted in the majority of the board becoming housing cooperators.

MAHC Changes its name

In 1973, the Association broadened its scope and changed its name to the Midwest Association of Housing Cooperatives when Eden Green Cooperative from Chicago, Illinois joined the organization. The Board of Directors of the Midwest Association of Housing cooperators was made up of 15 housing cooperators or 12 housing cooperatives with 3 professional or individual positions.

MAHC as a leader in education and resource center

In April 1974, MAHC leaders' went to Washington, D.C. to take part in the National Conference On Cooperative Housing, which was developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the National Association of Housing-Cooperatives (NAHC), and the Organization for Applied Science in Society (OASIS). The meeting encouraged all programs in cooperative housing to present a slate of current problems for possible problem solving and solution.

For three years of Ford Foundation funding for the development of MAHC as an education and resource center for housing cooperatives.

With the assistance of the Ford Foundation, HUD supplemented the first-year funding on a contract basis. To accomplish the work called for in the contract, MAHC established task forces: handbook, discount purchasing, training, and management evaluation. The groups met regularly and completed the projects contracted for on schedule.

From this year of work developed:

First draft of the handbook.

A report on items and services which could be used in a centralized purchasing system.

A course in financial management for cooperatives.

A course in evaluating the management of a cooperative.

A course on understanding management contracts.

In 1975, the Association had held mini-seminars in Ohio and Indiana for purposes of assisting those housing cooperatives with their problems. MAHC has published a quarterly Newsletter since 1971.

From the President

I urge every Board Member to assist the others whenever necessary or possible. Part of your responsibilities to this organization is to teach and mentor the value of "team work."

Just because you may not be assigned to a committee you should try to attend as many committee meetings as possible as the direction and work of MAHC is done at the committee meetings. All Board Members will write at least one article for the newsletter.

As always, I am available by telephone and at every Board Meeting. I look forward to conversing with any member requiring my attention.