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# The Characteristics of Housing Cooperatives

Housing Cooperatives are a distinctive form of home ownership that has many characteristics that make it superior to other residential arrangements such as single family ownership, condominiums and renting. A primary advantage of the housing cooperative is the pooling of the members' resources so that their buying power is leveraged, thus lowering the cost per member in all the services and products associated with home ownership. Another key element is that the members, through their elected representatives who serve on the board of directors, screen and select who may live in the cooperative, unlike any other form of home ownership.

Membership in a housing cooperative is easily and inexpensively transferred since it is done through a stock certificate, so there are no real estate title policies or the costs associated with filing deeds or paying monies to governmental taxing authorities. A housing cooperative's Board of Directors is elected by the membership, providing a voice and representation in the governance of the property. Rules are determined by the Board, providing a flexible means of addressing the issues that arise in a community to assure the members' peaceful possession of their homes.

If a member fails to abide by the rules or does not pay his or her fair share of the costs to operate the housing cooperative, laws are designed to deal with such situations in a much more expedited manner than other forms of ownership. In such situations, the defaulting member is treated like a tenant in a rental property, allowing the cooperative to evict that person in a less expensive and more rapid manner.

Since the housing cooperative holds title to all the property and housing structures, it bears the cost of maintaining, repairing and replacing them. This relieves the member from the cost and burden of such work. In that sense, the housing cooperative is like the landlord in a rental setting. However, as housing cooperatives are not-for-profit, the work is done at cost which results in lower costs to the residents.

More details concerning these attributes and advantages of cooperative living are described in the following pages:

- [The History of Housing Cooperatives](#)
- [Comparison of Housing Cooperatives to Condominiums](#)
- [A Glossary of Housing Cooperative Terms](#)

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