**Membership Coordinator**

**Training Checklist**

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**First Things First**

**Role of Membership Coordinator**

(From Sasona Wiki)

1. Keep the house as close to full occupancy as humanly possible.

2. Advertise! Update our ads on Craigslist every week — EVEN WHEN THE HOUSE IS FULL. Never stop advertising. When you post a craigslist ad, email the link to the house. (Tip: It's a good idea to post flyers at all of the campus coops once a semester. At the very least, all of the campus coops and ICC and College Houses offices should be heavily flyered every May, when students are about to graduate and move on. Flyers at 21st Street Coop should explain that Sasona was founded by four 21st St Motherfuckers.)

3. Answer emails/questions from prospective members and give them tours when you're around. Learn to recognize scam emails (bad grammar/punctuation, usually from a foreign country, says "advert," claims to be a model or working for some altruistic cause, attaches a picture of a beautiful girl, weird email addresses, obviously didn't read the ad, immediately starts asking about how much rent and deposit to pay, etc). Don't be a sucker. If you aren't sure if an email is a scam, send it to the house for advice.

4. Keep the [Sasona FAQ](http://wiki.sasona.org/SasonaFrequentlyAskedQuestions) updated. Email it out to all prospective members -- it will save you a lot of time answering questions.

5. Keep copies of all of the signed contracts. Make note of when people switch rooms so the Treasurer can figure out their prorated rent.

6. Keep the [Member Rents and Dates](http://wiki.sasona.org/MemberRentsAndDates) updated on the wiki. Be aware of whose contract is ending soon, and make sure they renew their contract. If, 6 weeks before their contract ends, they will not guarantee that they will renew their contract, start advertising that their room will open up soon. They can renew their contract at any time then, but if someone signs a contract for the room before they do, then they must either move out or, if other rooms are available, switch rooms. If their contract is not renewed a month before the end of the contract period, then advertise their room and let someone else sign for their room (after first giving them a chance). (See:[ContractSigningPolicies](http://wiki.sasona.org/ContractSigningPolicies))

7. Jack's Law: Make sure that new members pay their deposit/membership fee when they sign their contract. If they do not pay their deposit, then they cannot sign a contract. DO NOT let people move in if they haven't paid their deposit.

8. Make sure that people with no money and no job don't move in. It is easier to stop them from moving in than it is to evict them once they're here. People without jobs should pay both the deposit and first month's rent before moving in. If they cannot do so, then that is firsthand knowledge of a reason that they would be evicted -- and therefore a good reason to deny them membership.

9. Keep track of who attended two meetings and when. Keep the [Waiting List](http://wiki.sasona.org/ProspectiveMembersWaitingList) on the wiki updated. After a prospective member has been accepted, add them to the email list. Keep track of what prospective members have pets, and ensure that the house pet limit is not exceeded.

10. If several people are interested in the same room, decide who gets it. Be very familiar with the [Member Acceptance Policy](http://wiki.sasona.org/MemberAcceptancePolicy), and follow it faithfully. Update the [Member Acceptance Policy](http://wiki.sasona.org/MemberAcceptancePolicy), with the house's help, if you encounter situations that the policy does not adequately handle.

11. Keep extra copies of all of the room keys. Keep them organized. With the maintenance coordinator's help, make sure that everyone has a key and a functional lock on their door.

12. Find hostelers to fill vacant rooms until a long-term member can be found. Ask prospective hostelers for more information about themselves (such as a Facebook page) and ask them to explain why they would be a good fit for the house. Accept or reject potential hostelers based on who can take the room when it is available, who will stay the longest (in order to bring in the most money with the least turnover), and who will be the best fit for the house. Do not accept hostelers who won't be a good fit for the house. If there is any question whether someone will be a good fit for the house, contact the house and ask the house's opinion. Hostelers should be civil, friendly, able to pay in advance, and able to move out when their hosteling stay is completed. (House vote, 12-6-09.) (See: [HostelingPolicies](http://wiki.sasona.org/HostelingPolicies).)

13. Determine how much a member's deposit will be charged upon move-out. (See: [DepositReturnPolicies](http://wiki.sasona.org/DepositReturnPolicies).)

14. Act as House Mediator to try to solve conflicts. Encourage everyone to play nice. (See: [MediationInfo](http://wiki.sasona.org/MediationInfo))

15. Maintain the info@sasona.org email address. Answer emails in a timely manner. Ensure that the Steward knows the password and has access to info@sasona.org .

(For membership coordinator transitions, it might be helpful to read this list: [MembershipCoordinatorTrainingChecklist](http://wiki.sasona.org/MembershipCoordinatorTrainingChecklist))

**Log-in**

* Make sure you receive the login information for the [info@lareunioncoop.org](mailto:info@lareunioncoop.org) e-mail or [membership@sasona.org](mailto:membership@sasona.org) from the outgoing Membership Coordinator.
* Be sure that you are familiar with the prospective member response e-mail (saved in the drafts folder), the running waitlist (also saved in the drafts folder), and the rent roll (on Google Drive).
* [FOR SASONA?]

**Quick Start**

* Understand the membership acceptance process.
* Be familiar with how to prioritize admission.
* Be familiar with how to check the roster and keep tabs on members’ lease expiration dates.
* Understand how to maintain the Membership Roster on the wiki.
* Members should be notified that their leases are coming up at least 6 weeks before they expire, and should sign a new lease at least 4 weeks before the end of their lease term.
* If they cannot commit to another lease term by this point, even an extension of less than 6 months, then start seeking out a new member to fill the room.

**Recruitment**

One of the major responsibilities of Membership Coordinator is to work toward full housing capacity. How? By keeping up with member contracts, maintaining a waitlist, advertising room openings, and communicating with people interested in becoming prospective members.

**How to Fill a Room**

* First, contact all current members in good standing to gauge interest in a room switch.
* If no interest is shown, then contact current associates in good standing to see if any of them are able to move in on the current timetable.
* If no interest is shown, then e-mail out notification of the empty room to current waitlist participants.
* If waitlist participants show no interest within two days, then republish the approved Craigslist advertisement every other day to stimulate interest.

**Advertising**

* If there is a possibility of a room opening and/or there are few or no prospective members on the waitlist actively seeking residency… then, it is time to advertise!
* Do not assume that a long wait list means many people wanting to move in. Why? Many people move on and find another housing situation if they are not able to move in soon after applying.

**Where to advertise?**

* Post openings on Craigslist.
* Diversify by posting flyers around town.
* Make sure listing on gosection8.com is up-to-date.

**Communication**

* Respond to all e-mail inquiries as promptly as possible. People are very appreciative of prompt replies, and get very irritated/lose interest if it takes you too long to respond.

**Responding to Requests for Membership**

* If you receive emailed interest from an individual on the waitlist, ask them to come to a meeting or other convenient time to see the room and/or sign a contract and lay down a deposit.
* If you receive emailed interest from Craigslist or other new applicant, forward standard email with information about how to become a waitlist applicant (includes attending two house meetings, etc.)
* If you receive a phone call, ask for email address to forward the above information. If they do not have an e-mail address request that they attend a Sunday meeting.
* If after a week of these recruitment efforts, neither results in a new house member, then the membership coordinator should consult the house on other efforts such as approaching other coops, posting flyers locally, asking neighbors.

**Membership**

**Prospective Members**

* The Membership Coordinator should strive to attend as many meetings as possible to update the house on her labor that week, and to meet prospective housemates, give tours, answer questions, and create a welcoming environment.
* The Minutes Taker will record the names of any prospective members at the start of each meeting, as well as whether they have any pets, how many meetings they’ve attended, and why they want to live in a cooperative house. Minutes Taker shares all meeting minutes with the house, and will specifically email MemCo when prospectives have attended.
* Each week, MemCo will check the meeting minutes for prospectives. She will add new folks to a tracking spreadsheet in Google Drive, listing names, pets, the dates of the first and second meeting, and whether the prospective has been approved or denied for membership. (<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Vbk84CetYoZFXy6sHNizsooG1jlEGPu3NpyvT8ZktgM/edit?usp=sharing>)
* Membership approval expires one year after the prospective’s second meeting. They must attend two more meetings to be re-approved by the house. MemCo should alert prospectives ahead of time that their approval is set to expire and that to keep their place on the list, they must attend two more house meetings and meet the current residents.

**Waiting List**

* After prospectives have been approved, MemCo will add them to the waiting list page on the wiki. MemCo should also keep track of folks who have been denied and add them to the second list at the bottom of the page. (<http://wiki.sasona.org/ProspectiveMembersWaitingList>)

**Interviewing**

* La Reunion has an open membership policy, which means acceptance of all applicants, unless there is reason to believe the person would create a safety issue or be unable to pay rent. Hence, the only question we ask relative to admission is, “Do you have a stable source of income?” We also state that we do not accept anyone who may be violent, but we do not directly ask about such a history.
* Ideas that have been discussed but not adopted include a criminal background check, particularly around sex offenses. We have thus far concluded that sex offender registries are readily available, and this is relevant because children live at La Reunion. It would seem that Membership Coordinators could have the additional responsibility of checking the registry. To make it accurate we should therefore check an ID, which would be a new policy.
* *Editorial aside*: I think we should strongly encourage prospective members to become Associates so that we can see how much they value the co-op, in terms of doing labor and attending meetings, and see how they get along with others. We have recently learned that not everyone is a good fit, and I think it’s right and fair for the membership coordinator to speak to prospective members and associates frankly about what we observe. If an associate is not doing labor and not paying monthly fees, this is a violation of their contract and they should be taken off the associate list. If dues are paid and labor is done, but that person all that is okay but the person is constantly critical, or challenging to the culture of the co-op, or otherwise not a good fit, I believe the MemCo should have the right to bring the question of a move-in to a membership meeting to discuss, rather than automatically having that person fill a room or unit.
* We ask people about pets and pet allergies, what labor they might contribute, and whether they want a unit or to share a unit.

**Educating**

* History of the co-op
* Group activities: meals, parties, labor holidays, outside activities involving other co-ops
* Labor assignments, accountability, and fines
* Roommate assignments -- gender, pets and pet allergies, smoking
* Roommate co-operation -- pre-move-in discussion of how/when utilities will be paid, sleep schedules, noise levels, drug/alcohol use, level of cleanliness considered acceptable and how to manage conflicts in this and other areas.

**New Members**

* Ensure new members receive keys and “New Member FAQ” sheet, which is stored on Drive.
* Understand how to add new members to the e-mail list.
* Send out a “welcome” e-mail to the house so they know there is a new member.

**Section 8 Housing**

* Respond to all communication from Housing Authority inspectors, caseworkers, or other agents as promptly as possible.
* It’s crucial that we provide HACA with rent rolls, rent certifications, make sure inspections are getting completed and passed etc. for us to continue accepting tenants’ Section 8 vouchers.
* If you need to communicate something to a tenant’s caseworker but don’t know who that person is, you can look them up at <http://www.hacanet.org/downloads/S8%20Phone%20List%2002-05-2014.pdf>.
* If this link is out-of-date, use HACA’s internal search bar to look for “HCV program.”

**Contracts**

The Membership Coordinator is responsible for establishing, revising and expiring legally binding housing contracts.

**Establishing**

* After the new member has been selected, the member should meet with the Membership Coordinator to establish a contract.  The MemCo should read through the terms of the contract with the new member, making sure the new member understands these terms.
* The MemCo should ensure that all required papers are signed.  A contract should not be signed unless the new member can pay the deposit at that time.
* Any exception to this policy should go to the house meeting---but be forewarned, it’s usually a bad idea.  If the new member does not have a job or other source of income, they should pay the deposit and the first month’s rent both before signing a contract

**Revising**

* Revising a contract requires that the MemCo get signatures from all parties involved in the altering of a contract.

**Exiting**

* If a member is exiting from a contract at the contract’s stated end date, then all that is required from the MemCo is to put a copy of the completed lease in the lease file.
* If a member is exiting a lease prematurely, the MemCo should refer to the guidelines for revising a contract above.
* The MemCo should also be responsible for communication with the member about correct move-out dates, so they can advertise the room accordingly.
* The member will typically be assessed a contract break fee, unless otherwise assessed by a house meeting.  Don’t be too accommodating with waiving the contract break fee.  After all, they are backing out of a legally binding contract and causing extra hassle for you and the House.

**Mediation**

Assist the Steward in coordinating conflict mediation between members when needed.

**Lessons Learned**

This section of the document is for lessons learned, so that those lessons don’t get lost in house memory, and so that all future MemCo’s can learn from them, too.

* One scenario to avoid is any misunderstanding about labor assignments. It should be made clear, and perhaps the lease should be amended to further clarify, that the labor assignments are at the discretion of the Labor Czar(s), but the Czar will take into account any particular labor requests, physical limitations, and schedules.
* If there is more than one renter, be sure all parties are present and initial any changes to the lease, e.g., adding or dropping someone, changing any dates.
* Be sure that contracts are signed in front of you to avoid fraud and “misplacing” of the lease.