

Housing Cooperatives

Article Summarized by Christina Leighfield, Program Assistant, Ohio Cooperative Development Center

Housing cooperatives existed since the late 1800's when the first cooperative was formed in New York City. A housing cooperative is a member shared property or building in which the member(s) live. Each shareholder is entitled to a specific unit and has a vote in the cooperative. Every month each shareholder pays an amount that covers his or her proportionate share of the expenses. Those expenses would be a share in the mortgage payments, property taxes, management, maintenance fees, insurance, utilities and contributions to reserve funds. Benefits of cooperative membership include personal income tax deductions, lower turnover rates, lower real estate tax assessments, reduced maintenance costs, resident participation and control and prevention of absentee and investor ownership.

Housing cooperatives can have many different physical structures including townhouses, garden apartments, mid or high-rise apartments and single family homes. They can also be financially structured in different ways. Market rate, limited equity, leasing, senior housing, student housing, artists and mutual housing are all separate types of housing cooperatives (NACH, 2004). Members of a cooperative usually come from similar situations and wish to unite their resources to gain better prices on utilities or other items.

There are some housing cooperatives here in Ohio. The Perry Housing Association located in Perry County, Ohio makes homes available to those who cannot afford to own or rent their own homes. This particular association seeks no-interest or low interest loans and purchases the homes to be rented or sold to those in need. In 1990, Nasco Properties worked with Student Cooperative Organization at Ohio University to purchase ACME House. The 9-member house was managed for a year as a rental property, and by 1991 it had become a fully functioning cooperative. Today, Nasco Properties and the members of SCO are pursuing development in Athens through the purchase of additional houses, new construction or renovation and expansion of the existing cooperative house. In 1950, Oberlin College started its first student housing cooperative. 1951 brought a second building to add to the cooperative and at present there are 10 buildings in the co-op. In 1962, all of the buildings in the coop formed OSCA which stands for Oberlin Student Cooperative Housing and it has been known by that acronym since then.

For more information you may want to look at the following web sites:

<http://www.coophousing.org/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Housing_cooperative

http://www.wisc.edu/uwcc/info/i_pages/house.html

http://www.ncba.coop/abcoop_house.cfm

Student Coops:

<http://msu.coop/>

For more information please feel free to contact Travis West or Christina Leighfield at the Ohio Cooperative Development Center, OSU South Centers, 1864 Shyville Rd., 45661, by phone at: 740-289-2071 ext. 220 or 231 or in Ohio 800-297-2072 or by email at: leighfield.1@osu.edu or west.222@osu.edu.