



## Important changes to co-op elections

Changes to the Co-operative Corporations Act came into effect on October 1, 2023. Some of the most important changes affect how co-ops hold meetings and run their elections. CHF Canada has produced several co-op resources to help you amend your co-op's by-laws. You can get those resources on their website ([www.chfcanada.coop](http://www.chfcanada.coop)). **But, even if you haven't changed your by-laws, you must hold your co-op's elections according to the new rules.**

The biggest change is that members must be able to vote **before or at** the members' meeting. This means that co-ops cannot accept nominations from the floor of the election meeting. Nominations must be submitted by a specific date before the election meeting. Every member can go to the co-op office (or another place like the community room) and cast their ballot. Any member who has not voted in advance can cast their ballot at the election meeting.

Here are two ways that co-ops can get nominations before the election.

- Send out nomination papers to all members. There must be a deadline to submit nominations. Members could nominate themselves or someone else. Ask anyone who accepts a nomination to write a little something about themselves and why they want to be on the board. These can be given out to the members, or an all-candidates meeting can be held so that members can see who is running.
- Hold a nomination meeting before the election meeting. You could get nominations in advance, but you could also allow nominations from the floor of this meeting. Members who accept nominations will be asked to speak briefly at this meeting.

Nominations must remain open until at least six days before the meeting. The Elections Committee can decide to extend this deadline until three days before the meeting. Advanced voting should be scheduled to begin after the nomination period is closed. Members can vote in advance at the office, or another location provided by the co-op.

Members cannot assign their vote to anyone else.

If members cannot vote at the office or polling station because of special circumstances, such as illness or absence during polling hours, they can contact the office or the election committee. The committee can arrange for two persons to meet a member at the office or their unit, give them a ballot and put the ballot into a sealed box.



Co-ops can hold the election meeting in person, virtually or with a hybrid meeting. In any case, members must have the option of voting before the meeting. That can be done by having ballots available during the day in the co-op office or somewhere else (like the community room). You will need to keep careful track of who has voted before the meeting. Members who have not voted in advance can vote at the election meeting.

Another option is to have members vote online. Several companies offer that. Co-ops have used both Election Runner and Election Buddy, but there are others.

This is a huge change to the way housing co-ops have held elections. If you have any questions, please email [info@phchf.com](mailto:info@phchf.com).