



community&environmental
SOCIOLOGY

Needs and Desires of Madison Housing Cooperatives

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in collaboration with
Madison Area Cooperative Housing Association



Purpose

The Madison Area Cooperative Housing Alliance (MACHA) wants to understand the needs and desires of Madison housing cooperatives to better serve the co-ops.

Methods

MACHA identified 21 housing cooperatives in Madison. Of those, 11 are members of the Madison Community Cooperative (MCC), 8 are independent, and 2 are affiliated with UW-Madison. We did not survey the UW-affiliated cooperatives, or two MCC co-ops which were restructuring during the time of the survey. Of the remaining 17 co-ops, members from 11 participated.

We do not know how much respondents and non-respondents might differ. Here we report the most clear findings.

Who Participated

House	Number of responses	Potential members*
Ambrosia (MCC)**	8	24
Hypatia (MCC)	5	13
International Cooperative House (MCC)	10	25
New Wine Cooperative	5	10
Nottingham Cooperative	14	19
Ofek Shalom (MCC)	2	10
Perennial Cooperative	5	10
Rivendell Cooperative	6	6
Summit Avenue Cooperative	3	16
Syntropy (MCC)	1	8
Yahara Linden Cooperative	5	6
No identification	2	
TOTAL	66	147

* Because of the pandemic, these numbers are likely larger than residents living at the houses during the survey period

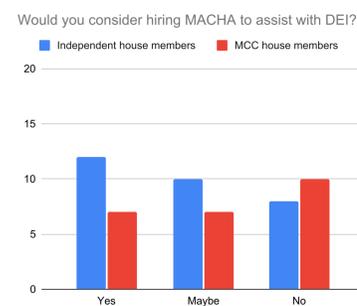
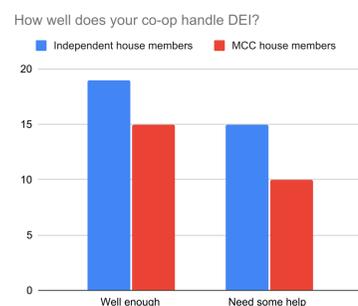
**MCC refers to Madison Community Cooperative houses

Findings—Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) was identified as one of the greatest social relation concerns in the survey. More than 80 percent of all survey respondents indicated that DEI is “very important” and about 40 percent of members indicated that they “need some help with this.” The issues include:

- Cultural barriers—co-op culture rooted in white culture
- Physical barriers—houses not ADA compliant
- Membership barriers—lack of leases, required for government assistance

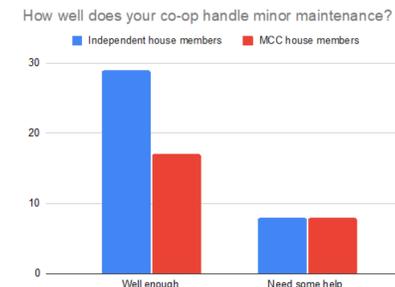
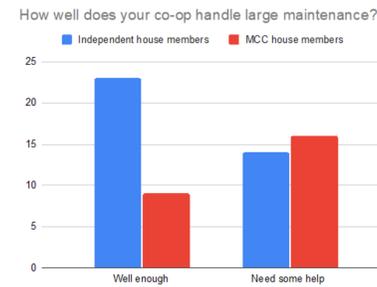
In survey and interview comments, a majority of respondents would consider having MACHA help with these issues.



Findings—Maintenance

Maintenance, and especial major maintenance, was identified as a concern for both independent and MCC houses.

A large majority of both independent and MCC house members indicated they would consider hiring MACHA to assist with major maintenance, and about half might do so for minor maintenance.

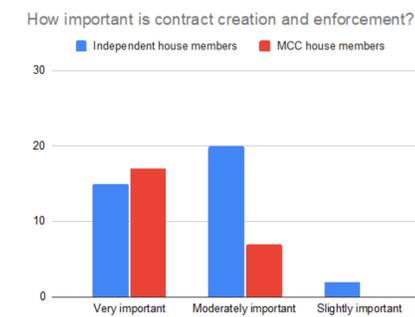
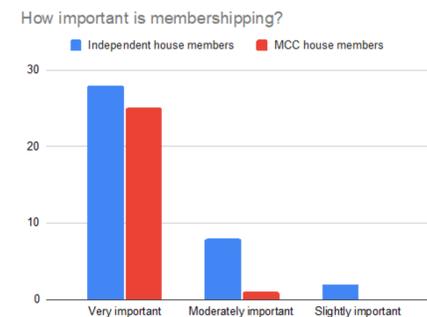


Findings—Membership Processes

Membership processes are of high importance to both MCC and independent house members. Membership issues include:

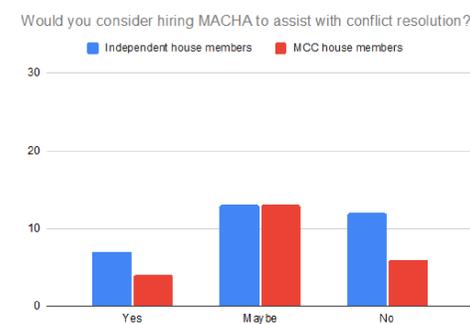
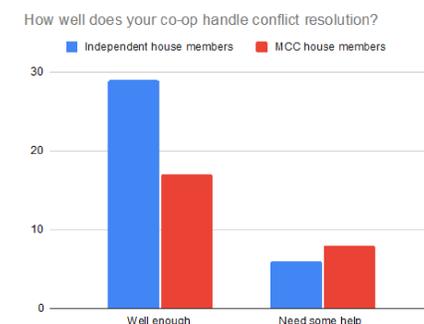
- Recruiting diverse members
- Membership protocols
- Contract creation and enforcement

Nearly half of independent members and 40 percent of MCC members would consider hiring MACHA to assist with membership development.



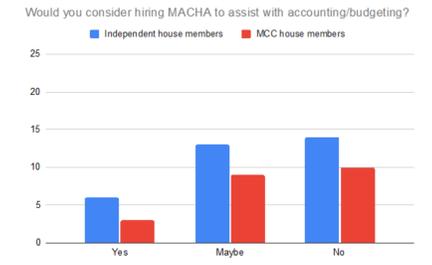
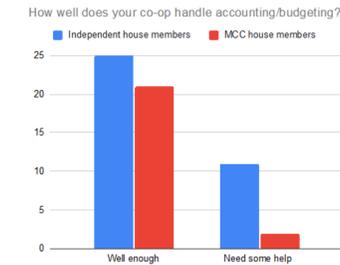
Findings—Conflict Resolution

Most respondents indicated that conflict resolution is “very important,” and that their houses handle conflict resolution “well enough.” However, about 30 percent of MCC house members and 15 percent of independent house members believe they “need some help” with conflict resolution and the majority of members may be interested in receiving assistance with this task. However, some also expressed concern about involving outsiders.



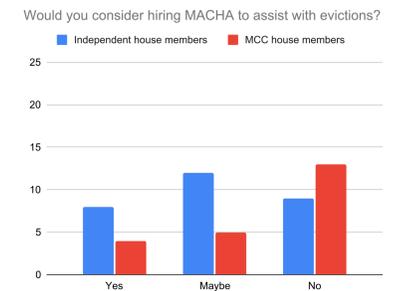
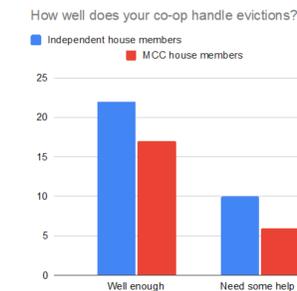
Findings—Financial Services

The large majority both independent and MCC house members indicated that their houses handle financial tasks, including taxes, accounting, and budgeting “well enough.” However, half would consider hiring MACHA to assist with accounting/budgeting. A similar question about taxes yielded similar responses. Additional survey and interview suggested houses might desire help with getting grants and 501(c)(3) status.



Findings—Legal Tasks

Both independent and MCC house members indicated concern over the relational and legal processes of evictions within their houses. About a third of responding independent house members and a quarter of MCC house members indicated that they “need some help with this.” However, nearly 70 percent of independent house members and about 40 percent of MCC house members would consider hiring MACHA to help with evictions.



Findings—Unique Concerns of MCC Houses

MCC provides a wide variety of services to their member houses already. Respondents appreciated MCC support for major maintenance and legal/financial tasks. However, two services they do not provide, according to respondents, is support for conflict resolution and diversity, equity, and inclusion. A few respondents also reported concerns about the MCC fee structure and relationships with MCC staff and leadership, which may also involve conflict resolution processes.

Other Minor Findings

Respondents rated buying food and supplies, food safety, and kitchen and meal organizing as very important, but did not indicate a need for assistance with these tasks.

Respondents rated house chores, decision making, and culture as very important, but did not indicate a need for assistance with these tasks. This is curious given their interest in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Care and bike sharing were not rated as important.

For more info, contact Randy Stoecker at rstoecker@wisc.edu, or MACHA at <https://www.machacoop.org/>. The full report is at <https://comm-org.wisc.edu/drafts/MACHA.pdf>