

## PROCESS TO BECOME A FULL ELDERBERRY MEMBER

Prospects may begin their investigation about Elderberry through our website and by phone, email or virtual visits. We encourage them to spend time on our website and to go to the three links on the Elderberry website at <https://www.elderberrycohousing.com/buying-a-community.html> to learn about our membership process and to complete the two self-evaluation questionnaires for prospective members. We also encourage them to ask as many questions and to visit as many cohousing communities as possible.

- 1 The first step in Elderberry's Membership Process, is for prospects to **visit** Elderberry in-person and speak with member(s) of the Membership Committee where they will receive a full tour and discussion about life in cohousing. They may also visit any homes that are on sale.
- 2 Before prospects consider Associate Membership, we want them to be fairly sure that they want rural, senior cohousing in NC; that Elderberry is on their "short list" of communities; and preferably that they are interested in moving in the near future. To do this and to become an Elderberry member, prospects must—
  - a. attend **at least one work day in-person and at least one business meeting** in-person (or virtually if in-person isn't possible).
  - b. attend **at least one other event** where most members are in attendance, and make a continued effort to talk with and get to know all community members.
- 3 The next step in becoming a member is **Associate Membership**. Because joining cohousing is a big step, we ask that prospective members talk more with the Membership Committee about what they see as their roles at Elderberry. To ensure all issues are addressed, we ask them to then sleep on their decision before requesting to be an associate member. The above recommendations are based on the reality of living in cohousing, including consensus governance, cooperative culture, required participation, and close interaction with other members. If the prospects still wish to become Associate Members, they will pay \$100/year for twelve months. This gives them access to everything at Elderberry, including internal e-mails and the members-only website with covenants and policies that every member agrees to follow. We request that associate members continue to interact with the Membership Committee and we encourage them to attend Elderberry events, making an effort also to meet as many community members as possible. This allows us all to know each other better, which is the responsibility of both prospects and Elderberry members. Associate membership is a deeper exploratory phase. It does NOT mean that the prospect is guaranteed a place at Elderberry.
- 4 If the Associate Members then express their desire to become full members of Elderberry and to buy a home at Elderberry, the Membership Committee will schedule **a private meeting (without the prospect present)** where Elderberry members are invited to speak about any concerns or additional information that they may need about the prospects. Depending on the outcome of this meeting, the Membership Committee may suggest further interactions with the prospects or proceed to schedule the Community Circle.
- 5 Before becoming a full member, associate members will participate in a **Community Circle**, an open and forthright **discussion with community members** in which the prospects are asked what it is that specifically attracts them to Elderberry. This is a separate function that is set up to let the community hear from the prospects and vice versa. After the Circle, the Membership

Committee will meet to be sure they are confident that the prospective member is ready to proceed to membership. If needed, the Membership Committee will set up another meeting with the community and/or the prospective member to address issues.

6 When the above steps have been satisfactorily completed and the prospective members' and the community's questions and concerns have been addressed, the prospects sign the **Checklist for Elderberry Equity Members**. They are welcomed as members and they are then able to buy a home at Elderberry!

*Approved by Elderberry Plenary April 11, 2026*