

Preparing the Election Step-by-Step

Here are some suggestions to help you promote and prepare for a great election. We recommend aiming to recruit more candidates than there are positions to fill so you can have a real election!

- **The board appoints an ad hoc committee** two to three months before the Annual General Meeting – see the sample Nominations committee job description in the Meeting Tools section of our website.
- **Determine the number of board positions up for election** – see your register of directors.
- **Create an Arrears Report** and deliver this to the chair of the meeting – see Arrears Report Template and Sample in the Meeting Tools section of our website.
- **Let members know about upcoming board vacancies at least six weeks before the AGM.** Invite them to run or to nominate others – see Calling All Candidates, Nominations form and Candidate's declaration form in the Meeting Tools section of our website.
- **Hold an event** a few weeks before your AGM to prepare members for running or voting in the upcoming election. Here are a few ideas:
 - An information session for members (and potential directors) to cover topics such as basic governance, what makes a good director, the director's role, time commitments, any specific skills the board may be looking for, support offered by the co-op and the election process
 - An all-candidates forum or candidates' meet and greet
 - A town hall to discuss co-op vision and leadership
- **Prepare an election newsletter** – ask candidates to submit a short bio that can be published to help members get to know who they are.
- **Prepare/assemble materials needed for the meeting** – please refer to the Meeting Tools section of our website. You will also need:
 - A list of declared candidates with room to add nominations from the floor on a flipchart, PowerPoint, or another visual platform that all members can see
 - Instructions for voting (i.e., the number of votes that must be included on each ballot and any other logistical directions) on a flipchart, PowerPoint, or another visual platform for all members to see
 - Forms submitted by candidates
- A timer, a card with a 20-second warning, and a “stop” card for candidates' two-minute remarks

- A ballot box
 - Election ballot tally sheet
 - Election record of ballot counting and election results report
 - A large envelope to seal the ballots, tally sheets and a record of ballot counting inside after the election results are announced
 - Prepare a space where members may vote in privacy if needed
 - Consider having a projector, speakers, and microphones to enhance your meeting; ensure you test your equipment prior to the meeting
 - **Do not bring the Ethical Conduct Declaration:** it is a mistake to get directors to sign this immediately after the election. Wait until the first board meeting after the AGM so it can be discussed before signing.
- **Plan for elections all year long:**
 - Educate members –an informed membership will set the bar high on election night.
- Invest in directors and members who express interest in serving on the board.

If it is a virtual meeting, the process is similar with the following differences:

- **Choose an appropriate platform for your virtual election** that allows for a secret ballot (i.e., Simply Voting, Election Runner etc.)
 - Depending on the platform, you may want to consider surveying your members for their preferred method of voting (online or by phone).
 - Ensure that you have updated email addresses for all members or an option for members without an email address to vote.
- If there is an option to vote by phone, ensure you have a third party available (i.e., staff) to transcribe the votes from the voice messages received during the meeting.
- **If using Zoom to host your meeting**, consider using the spotlight function during a candidate's two-minute remarks to ensure that members can view them.
 - You can also use the "raise hands" feature or another "reaction" to indicate a 20-second warning and a "stop" for these remarks.
- **Ensure you have a team to provide technical support during the meeting.** This can look like having a host to monitor the meeting and a technical support person. The technical support person would be responsible for transcribing the votes from the voice messages received during the meeting.



Referenced Documents and Relevant Resources

- Sample Nomination Committee Job Description
- Sample Arrears Report
- Sample Calling All Candidates
- Nominations Form
- Candidate's Declaration Form