

Compersia Membership Policy and Procedures

7/29/2016 - originally finalized

8/29/2017 - revised draft

9/5/2017 - FINAL

Purpose of this Policy

Our purpose is to introduce people to life in the Community, with the goal of new people joining the Community. The experience of the Visitor Period and Provisional Membership should reflect, as much as is possible, the experience of being a Member. In designing this process, our aim is to be supportive, transparent, trusting, and communicative, as these are important characteristics of our community. It takes time to establish the degree of mutual trust necessary to join in community, and the following stages are designed to allow that trust to naturally develop over time.

FIRST STAGE: INTERESTED PARTY

Description: Interested Party and the Community have authentic interactions with each other in a comfortable environment.

Goal: Learn about each other, get an impression, decide whether there's interest in exploring membership.

Labor expectation, desired relationship to labor: None

Methods to achieve the goal: Interested Parties can attend a meeting, a jam night, a dinner, an event, conduct an email or phone dialog or any combination of the above.

Process for Interested Party

In order to become an Applicant for membership, the Interested Party does the following:

- Write an email to the Community to introduce yourself and say you are interested in exploring membership. This is shared with all Members.
- The Interested Party is given the [House Guidelines](#) for review and an [Intake Questionnaire](#) to complete. Email the Intake Questionnaire to any member, or info@compersia.community.
- The Intake Team reviews the Questionnaire and meets with the Interested Party in-person, by video, or phone (in that order of preference) and submits their recommendation to the full membership.
- If the membership approves you for a Visitor Period, you are assigned an "Applicant Buddy" to help you schedule visits and navigate the membership application process.

- The Intake Team consists of at least two people, independently reviewing applications. All Provisional and Full Members have access to the same applicant information as the Intake Team.

Transition to the next stage criteria: Mutual interest in pursuing membership. Visitor Periods are the first significant opportunity for the Community to explore membership for the Interested Party and will generally be approved.

Compersians' Responsibilities to Interested Parties: List easily accessible activities, organize one or more regular and recurring events where Interested Parties can interact with members of the Community in representative ways.

SECOND STAGE: VISITOR PERIOD

Description: A formal and structured way for an Interested Party to begin seeking membership in the Community. The Community will engage in discussion with the Applicant beforehand to design a process that fits the needs of everyone involved, and allows the Applicant to experience the Community in whatever way necessary for their own decision-making process.

Goal: For the Applicant, to learn about the Community in depth and to decide whether to pursue membership. For the Community, to assess whether the Applicant is a good fit socially, culturally, philosophically, politically, and personality wise. We desire an ambitious community and are seeking those who will not only help us maintain our current situation but are committed to making themselves and us all more awesome.

Things to learn about each other

- organizational commitment (comfort level and involvement with meetings, events)
- interpersonal (communication and interaction styles, conflict management)
- domestic labor (cleanliness standards, food preferences, childcare)
- financial habits (spending habits, preferences and skills for income generating labor)
- physical and mental health (limitations and strengths, history, social network, interests)
- demonstrated values (level of engagement, ideals, spiritual practices)

Process for Applicant

Design a Visitor Period in conjunction with your Applicant Buddy. A Visitor Period should include the following elements:

- a concrete timeframe
- some amount of time living together (ideally, 30 days)
- a general visitor-proposed personal budget
- [tracking your labor](#)
- reading and engaging with Compersia's major policies and documents
- an extended interview

- in-depth conversations with the current membership
- participation in group meetings
- engagement with the children
- participation in shared work, projects, and housekeeping
- a round of clearnesses halfway through the Visitor Period
- plan for a non-residential 'break' period of at least two weeks after the visit is over for sober reflection and consideration

Necessary steps to take during the Visitor Period:

- Early on in the Visitor Period, you will submit a [Membership Application](#) (to become a Provisional Member). The Application includes the Call to Greater Awesomeness.
- After you have completed the Application, we will schedule an interview with you. Designated Members will sit down with you for a couple hours to hear your life story and ask you a list of standard questions. Notes will be taken for members not in attendance.
- Halfway through your Visitor Period, you will conduct individual clearnesses with all Provisional and Full Members. This is the first of two parts of the [Clearness Process](#).
- Once your interview, individual clearnesses and Membership Application are complete, you will meet with the membership to discuss your application. During this meeting, you should expect the following:
 - You will be asked to answer questions and address any concerns raised by others.
 - Members will relate their thoughts on their individual clearnesses with the group, with opportunity for your feedback as well.
 - You will not be given a decision at this meeting, but can expect to hear a decision from the Community within one week.

Financial Expectation: During the Visitor Period, the Applicant does not share income or expenses with the Community, and must provide for their own needs (although they are welcome to join communal meals, participate in communal systems, and use communal resources).

Labor expectation, desired relationship to labor: Applicants are expected to participate in income-generating and non-income-generating labor, and to track their labor transparently. Non-income-generating labor can include, but is not limited to, cleaning, home improvement, time spent in meetings, communal cooking, administrative tasks, childcare, and Community-valued political work. (An Applicant's income-generating labor counts as communal labor for the purposes of tracking, even though it is not held in common.) The point is to get as accurate a portrayal as possible of what full participation will look like.

Transition to the next stage criteria: After the Visitor Period has ended, the Applicant moves out and everyone involved reflects on the experience and decides whether to continue the membership process. If all Provisional and Full Members approve your application, you are extended an invitation good for six months (extendable to one year with a visit of any length) to join as a Provisional Member.

Compersians' Responsibilities to Applicants: Be available to talk with the Applicant, answer questions, process thoughts, feelings, and reactions. Be timely and up front about curiosities, concerns, expectations. Make sure our important information is well organized, accessible, and presented to the Applicant. Members should talk to each other regularly about the Visitor Period.

THIRD PHASE: PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Description: Membership in the Community with some limitations and systems put in place to limit the Community's (and Provisional Member's) exposure to risk, particularly financial. Termination of Provisional Membership is much easier than termination of full Membership.

Goal: The Provisional Member participates in income- and expense-sharing and communal decision-making in order to determine whether the Provisional Member and the Community are a good fit. For the Provisional Member, to see what it feels like being a Member. For the Community, to see if there are any problems that take longer to show up and to address them within a context of more limited risk.

Process for Provisional Member

In order to transition from provisional to full membership, the Provisional Member must:

- After at least six months, the Provisional Member can request full membership.
- Reviewing your Membership Application:
 - Review your previous Membership Application. Has it changed after living with us, and if so, in what ways? Re-answer the initial questions from your new perspective.
 - Review your success at meeting your last Call to Greater Awesomeness according to your metric.
- Complete the Clearness Process with all Provisional and Full Members at the end of your Provisional Membership.

Financial Expectation: Identical to full Members. Provisional Members are included in the income-sharing and expense-sharing structures of the Community.

Labor expectation, desired relationship to labor: Identical to full Members. Provisional Members are expected to contribute a specified number of hours per week of combined income-generating and non-income-generating labor, and to track their labor transparently.

Transition to the next stage criteria: The Clearness Process addresses any individual and group concerns that the full Members have about the Provisional Member. During the group clearness, full Members will address any questions or concerns from your Membership Application. If all Full Members approve your application, you become a Full Member. If not,

your Provisional Membership can be extended (if any concerns are considered resolvable by a longer Provisional Membership) or terminated (if any concerns are not considered resolvable by a longer Provisional Membership).

If a full year of provisional membership has passed and the Provisional Member does not wish to apply for full membership, then the provisional membership will be respectfully and transparently revoked. Applicants removed from the membership track at any time for any reason are welcome to resubmit an application for membership at a future time.

Methods to achieve the goal: All powers and responsibilities of membership with the following three exceptions: 1) Provisional Members cannot Block a consensus decision. 2) Provisional Members are not given unfettered access to the Community's shared bank account or other finances. (They can get expenses reimbursed, or are given a budget, or have a credit card with a limit, or the like.) 3) Provisional Members, after all attempts at resolution have been exhausted, can have their membership terminated if consensus amongst the Full Members for their continued membership ceases to exist.

Compersians' Responsibilities to Provisional Members: Treat Provisional Members exactly like Full Members. Be available for clearnesses.

FOURTH STAGE: MEMBERSHIP

Every year, Full Members are expected to:

- Complete the Clearness Process.
- Review their success at meeting their last Call to Greater Awesomeness according to their metric.
- Write a new Call to Greater Awesomeness on their communiversary.
- Be involved with Interested Parties, Applicants, Provisional Members.

