

House Agreement

Shared Meals

Responsible: Indoor Common Space

Adopted 1/22/2017

The purpose of this House Agreement is to set forth our goals and intentions around shared meals. We expect that our shared community culture around meals may evolve and become more specific as we move into our building and begin sharing meals. This is a starting point. We've tried not to get bogged down in the details.

Vision

- Shared meals will provide an opportunity for healthy nutrition and relaxed and meaningful social interaction among community members.
- In addition to scheduled meals, we encourage spontaneous meal planning and preparation as well as planned meals (such as potlucks, ordering-in food, meals prepared at other times of day than dinners, and bring-your-own-meat-or-vegetable BBQs).
- We encourage PDXC members to bring their own food and join the group in the dining room at any time, even if you haven't signed up for a particular meal.
- We encourage PDX members to attempt to provide meals that take the food sensitivities of different PDX Commons members into account. Although cooks have the freedom to select what they want to cook, we commit to building our capacity as a community to prepare meals that most people can eat (e.g. by sharing recipes and learning how to cook appropriate meals).
- We also commit to posting menus and meal ingredients with as much advance notice as possible so that community members can decide if they want to sign up for the meal.
- Rituals are encouraged at the beginning of each meal. These might include personal announcements or sharing, a brief meaningful reading or poem, nondenominational sharing such as moment of silence, gratitude sentiment or a song.
- We encourage community members to plan shared meals several times a week at a minimum to give us opportunities to enjoy each other's company and good food. There is no expectation that every community member will participate in each meal.

Participation and Meal Roles

- The Participation Workgroup will develop the final participation policies, including policies around participating on Meal Teams.
- We expect all community members to participate in preparing or otherwise supporting shared meals. As stated in the participation policy, we expect all members to sign up at least once a month to help out on a meal team. More often is encouraged.

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- We recognize that sometimes members will be out-of-town or have a temporary or permanent condition that will prevent you from participating in meal preparation or cleanup. We encourage you try to find some job that you can do that will fit your abilities, such as dishwashing/cleaning the kitchen, purchasing food for meals, setting the tables and serving, or being the bookkeeper for shared meals.

Signing up to Cook/Be on a Meal Team

- An individual acting as “lead cook” or “lead meal organizer” will sign up on the shared meals calendar for a date and time to offer a meal and will ask for the number of helpers he or she would like.
- Individuals will respond to the posting of a meal by signing up to be on the meal team, and indicating what specific job(s), if any, they prefer.
- The lead cook will propose the menu for the meal, with participation from the meal team, as desired. We encourage cooks to plan meals that acknowledge the food sensitivities of community members. This does not mean that all meals must be gluten free or meet all members’ food preferences.
- The meal preparation team will decide how to divide up responsibilities for menu planning, shopping, meal preparation, serving, and clean-up, and posting menu and meal ingredients.
- We encourage experienced cooks to mentor meal helpers who are less experienced in cooking for large numbers and build their capacity to lead meal teams in the future.
- The meal team should post the detailed menu and ingredients for the meal on the meal calendar at least one day prior to the final date for signing up to eat a meal.

Signing up to Eat Meals

- Individuals who want to eat at a scheduled meal should sign up for the meal at least 2 days before the meal (or with the express permission of the cook) to allow time for the meal team to determine menu amounts for food shopping.
- If you sign up for a meal but don’t show up, you will be charged as if you had attended that meal.
- Members are welcome to invite visiting family members and guests to join us for regularly scheduled meals, at their own expense. Please sign up for all visitors following the same timeline as for signing up to eat a meal.
- The Outreach/Membership Committee may invite interested households to join us for a scheduled meal, following the same timeline and rules. The cost of meals for these households will be charged to a budget line established by the Outreach/Membership Committee.

Special Shared Meal Roles

An ongoing Meals Team will be formed under the supervision of the appropriate Standing Committee to plan and carry out the following functions:

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- Oversee the meal sign-up systems (to cook/prepare a meal and to eat at a meal) and take steps, as needed, to keep it working smoothly: e.g. reminding us to sign up to cook (as lead cooks and helpers), sign up to eat, leave the kitchen clean, etc.
- Develop a system for ordering and purchasing the kitchen staples and clean-up supplies.
- Develop detailed procedures for kitchen cleanup and safety.
- Arrange for an individual to keep track of meal-related expenditures and meals eaten, and prepare monthly statements of amounts credited to or owed by household.

Safety and Kitchen Cleanup Procedures

- All individuals working on preparing our meals are encouraged to complete the Oregon Food Handler certification course online, which costs \$10 and takes about one hour.
- To keep our meals safe and maintain the kitchen in good condition, each meal team will follow clean-up procedures for the kitchen and great hall established by the Kitchen Team.
- The Meals Team and other Committees, as appropriate, will identify kitchen deep-cleaning tasks for scheduled community work sessions.

Meal Costs and Recordkeeping

- We will develop or customize a recordkeeping system that will enable us to schedule meals, sign up to work on meal teams for scheduled meals, and sign up to attend each scheduled meal. We will also use the system to:
 - record meal-related expenditures for each shared meal and credit these expenditures to individual households;
 - record attendees at each meal and assign per person costs for each meal to member households (including members and their guests, and according to policies that may be developed for hosting visitors interested in PDX Commons.
 - periodically compute the balance of meal expenditure credits and charges for each household and bill or credit each household with its negative or positive balance.
- The costs of alcoholic beverages will not be charged to shared meal expenditures. Individuals may bring their own drinks and/or share them with other community members at their own expense or through a separately funded beverage club.

Other

- All leftovers will be shared among individual households and taken away after the meal. Individuals should bring their own containers for leftovers for this purpose. Leftovers will not be stored in the community refrigerator.

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Suggestions for Implementation

- After consulting with the community via survey or some other means, the Meal Team will pick two days of the week for regularly scheduled meals. We encourage additional shared meals on other days at the preference of the lead cook.
- Individual community members' food sensitivities will be posted online and in the kitchen.
- Planned meals, meals teams, and menus will be posted on a recordkeeping system that is easily accessible by community members.
- The lead cook will post a detailed ingredients list at least one day before meal signups are due.