



All-member survey report

April 2018

Over the summer of 2017, NASCO conducted two surveys to take a snapshot of NASCO member cooperatives, the members of the co-ops, and identify opportunities for improvement. This report is based on these two surveys that YOU, dear co-oper, helped us with.

We sent the Annual Member Survey to all NASCO members and included questions on co-op members' demographic information, experiences within their co-ops, and engagement with NASCO programming.

We sent the Member Co-op Census to be filled out by one representative from each NASCO member cooperative and included questions

about co-op information, membership, governance, economics, community lifestyle, and engagement with NASCO programming.

There were 276 individuals from 41 co-ops who completed the Annual Member Survey and 25 co-ops completed the Census. While our findings are not representative of the entire co-op movement, your responses have offered us valuable insight on our member landscape into the first year of this survey. Next year, we want to hear from even more of you! Your engagement is essential in informing NASCO how to best serve you. We will be sending this year's surveys in August 2018. We strongly encourage you to participate!

This survey was made possible with the generous help of Nico White— a current co-op member and NASCO Properties board member since 2015. We are thankful to have such amazing people in the cooperative movement!

What is NASCO?

Since 1968, we have been working with students, worker-owners, activists, and community members who are interested in applying cooperative principles to meet their needs and fulfill their missions. We provide education and technical assistance to our members, assist our members in communicating with each other, act to educate the public on cooperative principles and practices, and promote the co-op movement as a whole.

Our strength lies in our members. NASCO is your go-to support for cooperatives in all phases of the lifecycle to evolve and deal with transition. NASCO also offers hands-on support for improving the internal functions of co-operatives, bringing deep understanding and experience.

Membership

You are a part of the larger cooperative movement.

Member benefits

- Eligibility to vote in NASCO Board elections
- Free annual on-site training
- Up to five complimentary hours of consulting services
- Free participation in the Cooperative Internship Network
- Up to 50% discount on NASCO event registration fees
- Access to our job posting service

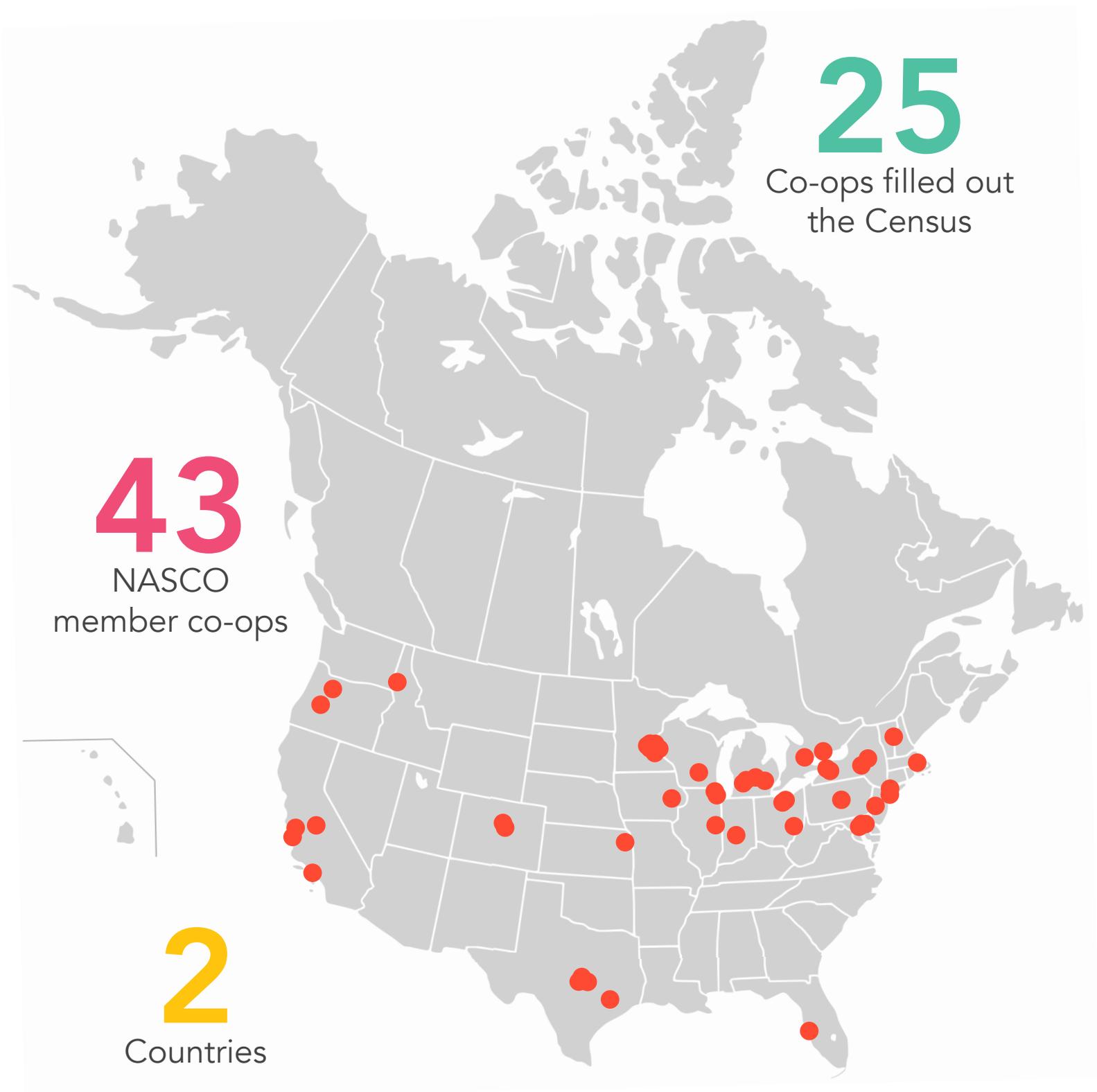
Did you know?

Individuals who participated in NASCO programming were more likely to agree that they regularly participated in their co-op's events, that they feel invested in the success and future of their co-ops, and that they would recommend their co-op to others.

Programs

What we do	What it is	How to get connected
NASCO Cooperative Education and Training Institute	Our flagship annual conference of cooperators from across the continent	NASCO Institute takes place every November. Online registration opens in August.
Staff & Managers Conference	A conference tailored to the unique needs of group-equity housing cooperative staff	Staff & Managers Conference takes place every May. Online registration opens in March.
Regional support	Support to local groups to organize regional gatherings of cooperators	Interested in hosting a regional conference? Contact us for a free consultation.
Cooperative Internship Network	A summer internship placement service connecting future co-op leaders with cooperative career opportunities	The application to host a summer intern becomes available online in February. The application for summer internships becomes available online in March.
Training and education	Cooperative education workshops	Requesting a training? Contact us for a free consultation.
Consulting	Technical assistance tailored to member co-op needs	Needs technical assistance? Contact us for a free consultation.
Property leasing	NASCO Properties, a "co-op of co-ops," is a system of properties across the US with the houses supporting one another with finances and information	Interested in joining NASCO Properties? Contact us for a free consultation.
Online Shared Resource Library	Free online templates, trainings, videos, policies, and technical resources	Visit www.nasco.coop/resources
Linking and networking	NASCO acts as the organized voice of the North American cooperative housing movement and the youth cooperative movement	Have a collaboration in mind? Contact us and we'll do our best to connect you.
Monthly newsletter	Our monthly newsletter reports on recent NASCO activities as well as the greater cooperative movement globally	Subscribe at www.nasco.coop/subscribe

Overview of our members



16

Individual houses are owned by NASCO Properties (NP) rented out by...

8

leasing cooperatives across the United States

NP is a "co-op of co-ops," a system of properties across the US with the houses supporting one another with finances and information.

We're here for you.

NASCO provides training on how to become incorporated and tax exempt!

76%

of our member co-ops are incorporated

56%

of our member co-ops are tax-exempt

45:1

Average member-to-staff ratio for co-ops with staff

8%

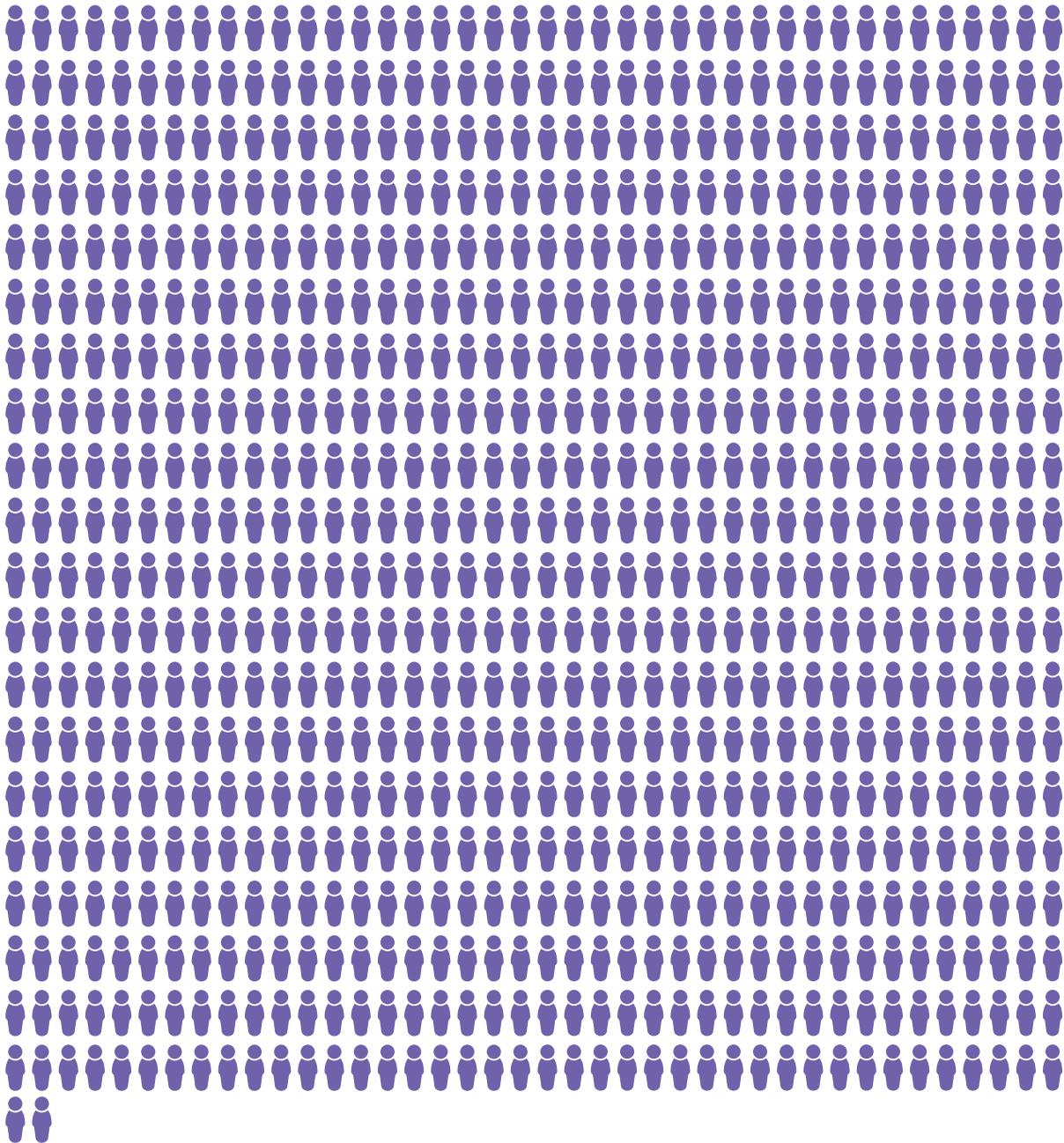
of our member co-ops are ADA compliant in all areas

Did you know?

Co-ops with more staff tend to have more satisfied co-ops



Our smallest member co-op is The Midden in Columbus, OH, with four members.



Our largest member co-op is Waterloo Co-operative Residence Inc. in Waterloo, ON, with 802 members.

Types of housing offered



88%
single rooms



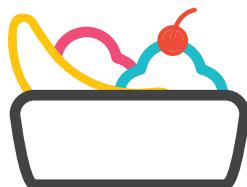
80%
double rooms



16%
triple rooms



16%
suites



16%
apartments

Membership

1/3

of co-ops have different levels of membership

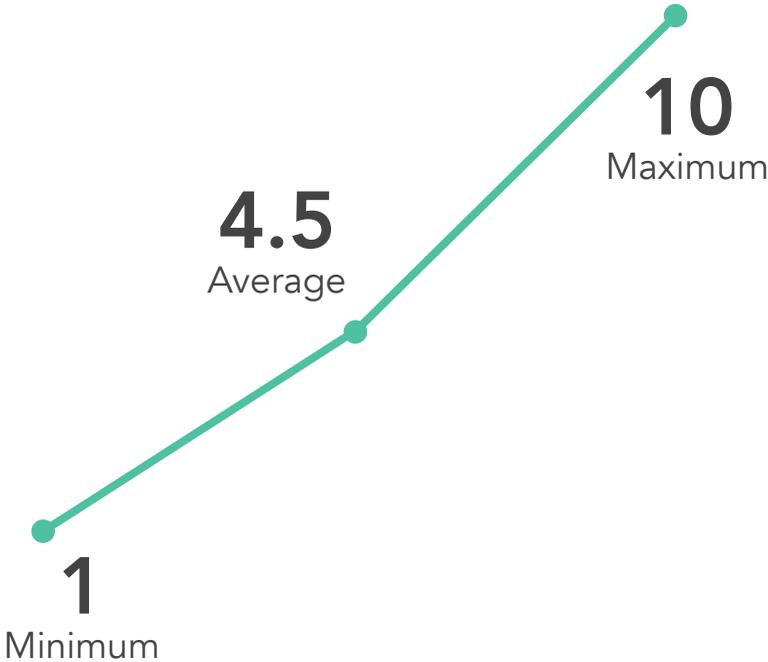
Such as food boarding programs, voting and non-voting members, and different levels of equity ownership

1/3

of co-ops have income requirements

Such as low-income requirements and income verification processes

Labor

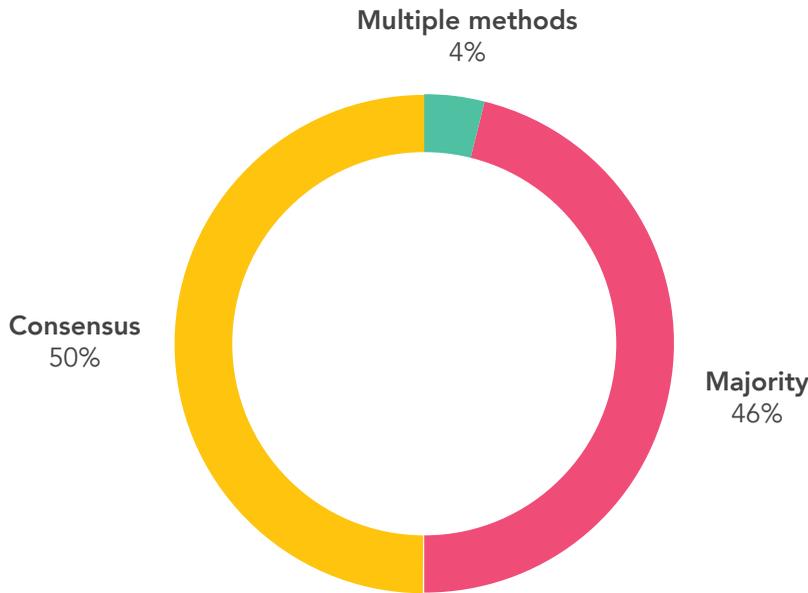


Co-ops ranged in the amount of labor they required from members, from a minimum of one hour per week to a maximum of ten hours per week. On average, co-ops required 4.5 hours of labor per week from their members.

Some co-ops divide up labor requirements into different categories, such as chores and cleaning; cooking and shared meal preparation; and officer, committee, and stewardship positions.

Governance

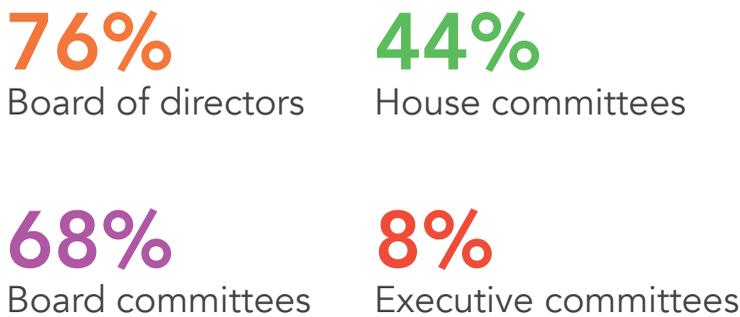
Primary decision-making method



We're here for you.

Visit NASCO's shared resource library for example policies, trainings, and templates: www.nasco.coop/resources

Governance leadership groups used



Just over three-fourths of co-ops have a board of directors (76%), while slightly less have board committees (68%). Less common leadership groups include house committees (44%) and executive boards or committees (8%).

Most co-ops review and revise their policies as needed (88%), with only 16% of co-ops reviewing policies monthly, quarterly, or annually.

Frequency of policy revisions



Finances

\$534

Average monthly
rent cost

\$100

Average monthly
food cost

52%

offer financial
assistance to
members

Participating housing co-ops had an average monthly rent of \$534, though prices varied greatly across regions, houses, and rooms.

Of co-ops who provided members with food, the average monthly cost for food was around \$100. Provided food ranged from stocking the kitchen with a few staples to cooking community meals everyday.

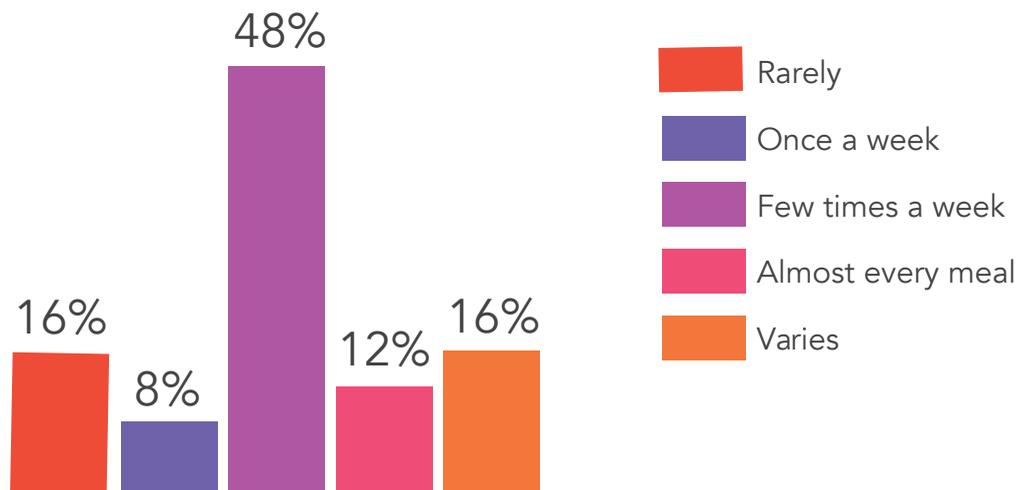
Over half of participating co-ops offer some form of financial assistance to their members (52%). Co-ops have a wide variety of financial assistance programs, including setting up payment plans with individuals who are behind on rent, referring members to financial scholarships they can apply to, granting members emergency loans if they cannot pay rent, offering sliding scale rent prices, and maintaining mutual aid funds for members.

Members doing more

A unique approach to paying rent was noted by Madison Community Cooperative, who allows members to add on donations to their rent every month. Every year, a committee hosts a grant project to donate the collected donations to local community organizations

Community lifestyle

Shared meals



Almost half of responding co-ops reported that they eat together a few times a week (48%). Some co-ops share meals only once a week (8%) and some rarely eat together (16%). A few co-ops share almost every meal together (12%). For several co-ops, each house varies in the amount of meals they share (16%).

Shared amenities

Almost all co-ops offer some sort of communal space and resources (96%). The most common types of communal spaces and resources are wireless internet (96%), shared kitchens (92%), laundry facilities (92%), and bike storage areas (92%). In fact, it's more common for co-ops to have bike storage areas than it is for them to have car parking (76%). Co-ops also offer garden space (80%), shared tools (76%), recreation areas (60%), and workshops (44%).

Other shared spaces and resources mentioned by co-ops include a compost system, pool, sundeck, computer lab, study area, bike repair shop, shared office space, and a shared van.

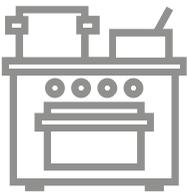
Common amenities



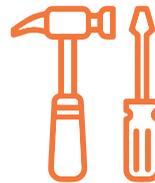
96%
Wireless internet



80%
Garden space



92%
Shared kitchens



76%
Shared tools



92%
Laundry facilities



60%
Recreation areas



92%
Bike storage areas



44%
Workshops

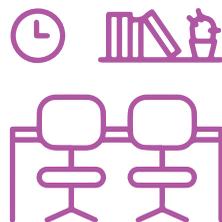
Cool, but uncommon amenities



Swimming
pool



Sundeck



Shared office
space



Computer
lab



Shared van

NASCO members

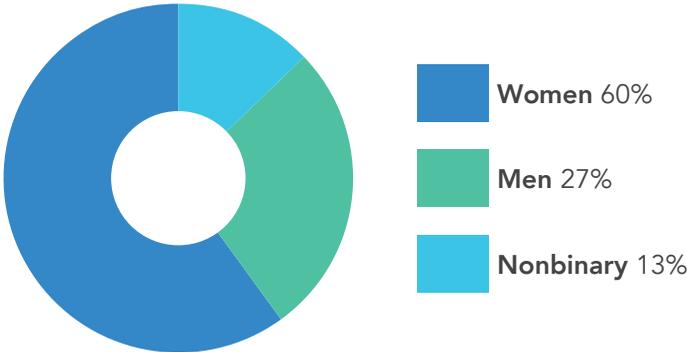
Demographic data were separated into two categories: members of NASCO and members of NASCO Properties (NP). All demographic questions in the survey were optional.

As a refresher, **NASCO members** pay annual dues to support the cooperative movement and receive benefits such as discounts on NASCO events, free workshops, and more. See page 4 for a complete list of benefits of being a member.

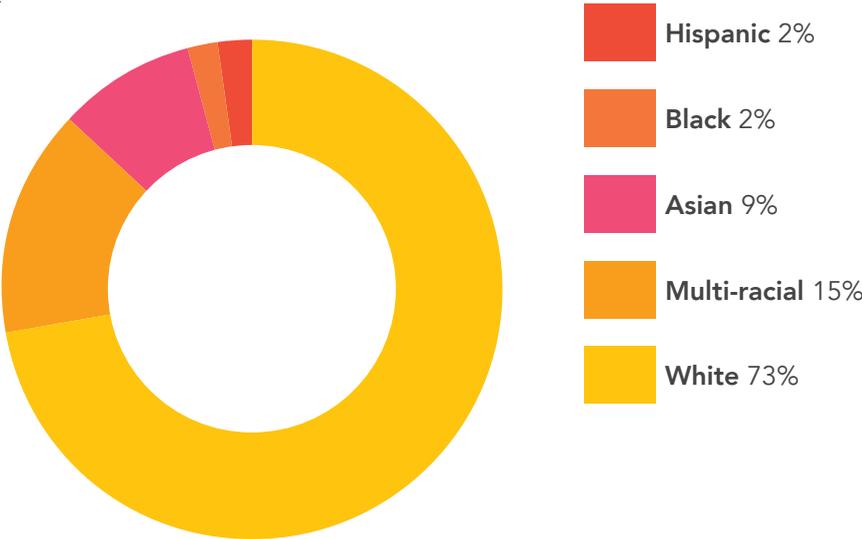
Age



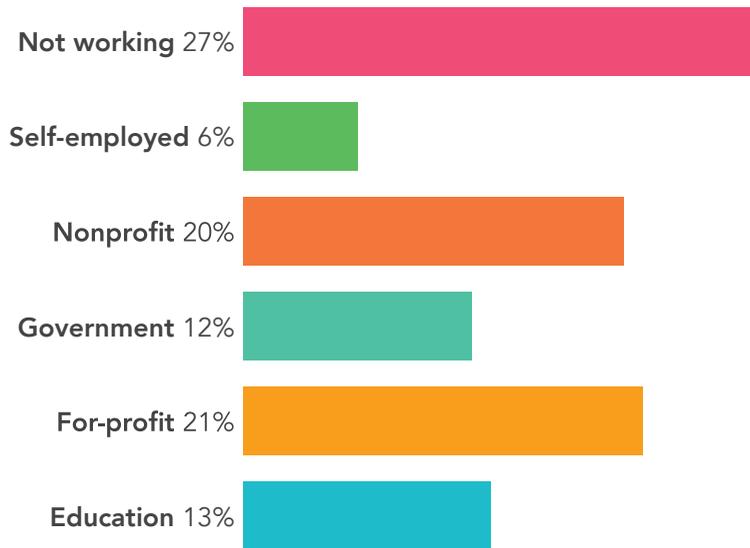
Gender



Race



Work status

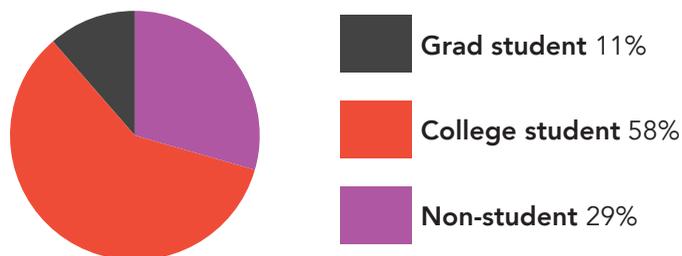


276

Individuals filled out our survey this year.

Did you fill it out?
Participate this year!
Help us gather an accurate representation of our movement.

Student status



We're here for you.

NASCO values and welcomes all people. We offer training on recruitment and inclusion for your co-op.

NP members

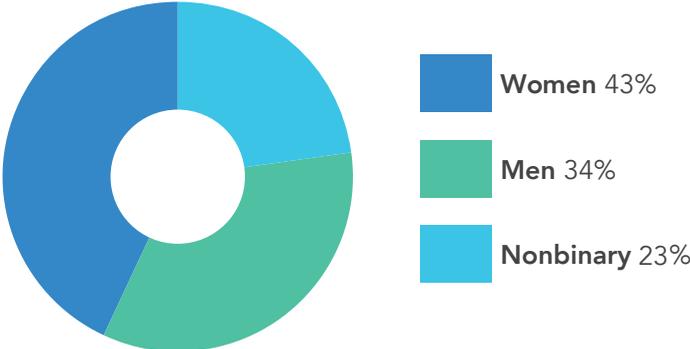
Demographic data were separated into two categories: members of NASCO and members of NASCO Properties (NP). All demographic questions in the survey were optional.

NP members include those who live in properties that are owned by a larger system of co-ops across the US. In essence, NP is a "co-op of co-ops" made up of houses supporting one another with finances and information. As of April 2018, there are 16 houses that are leased by 8 co-ops in NP.

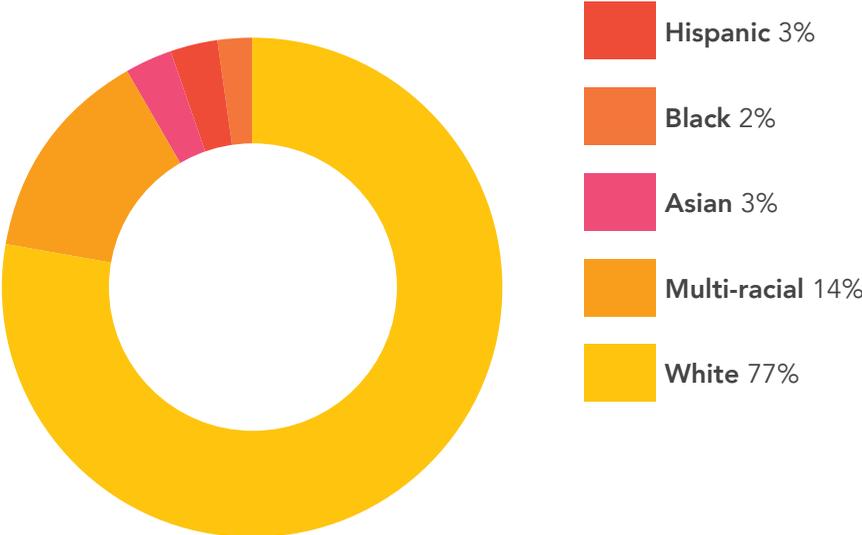
Age

18 Youngest
72 Oldest

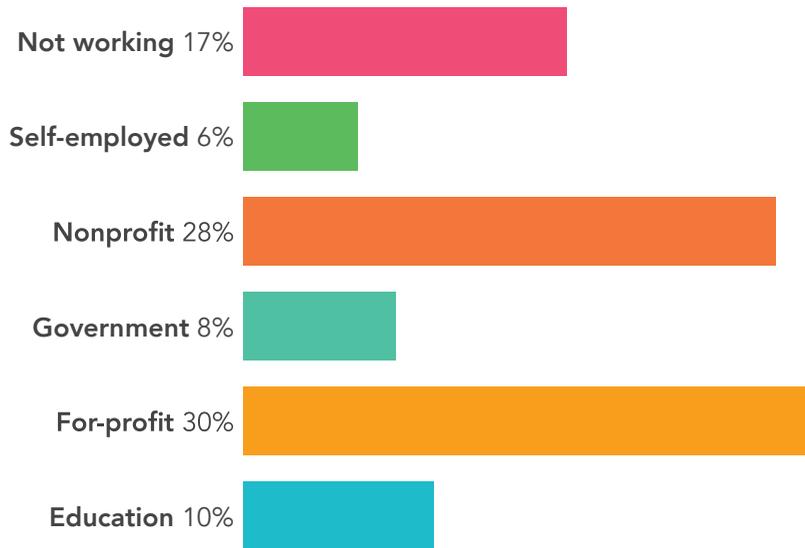
Gender



Race



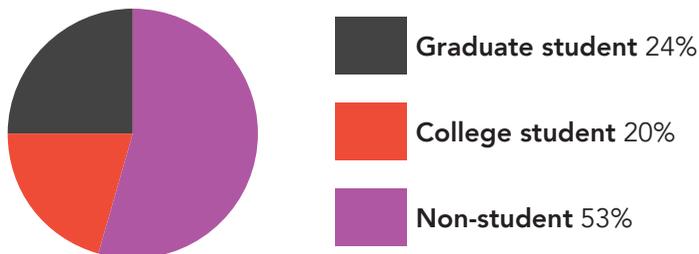
Work status



Did you know?

Although only 10% of the general U.S. population works in the nonprofit sector, 20% of all NASCO members and 28% of NP co-op members work for a non-profit. Hoo-rah!

Student status

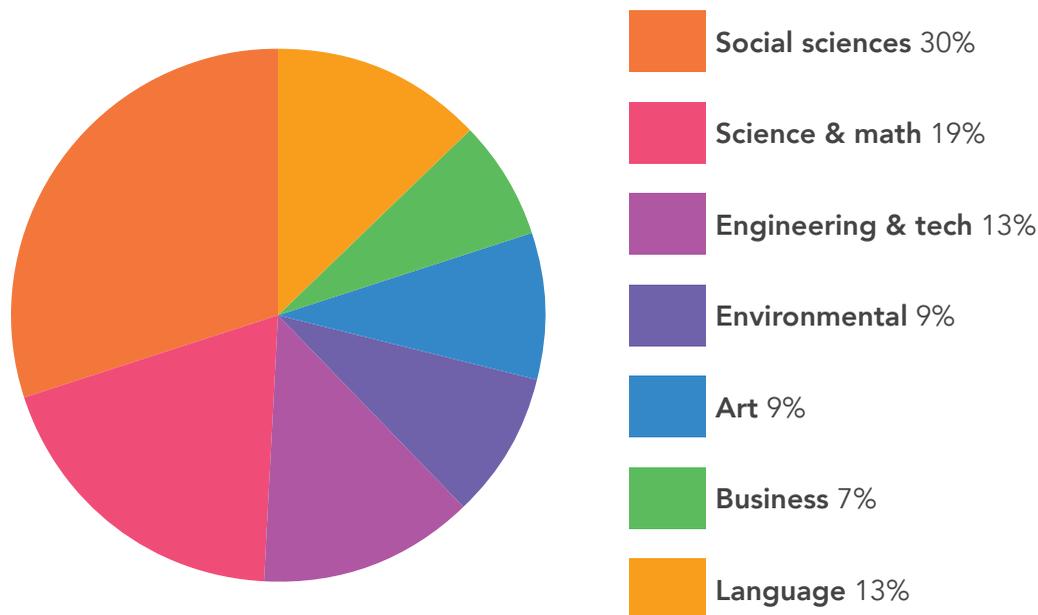


We're here for you.

Yup, we're talking to you, non-students! Although the word "students" is in our name, we do provide programming geared for cooperators not in school. From connecting you to summer internships to full-time positions in the cooperative sector, NASCO is here to support you.

All members

Areas of study



Did you know?

Among the general U.S. population, business degrees are often the most or second most common degrees pursued, but they're the least common majors within NASCO and NP co-ops.

Length of co-op experience

<1 month

Shortest length of involvement

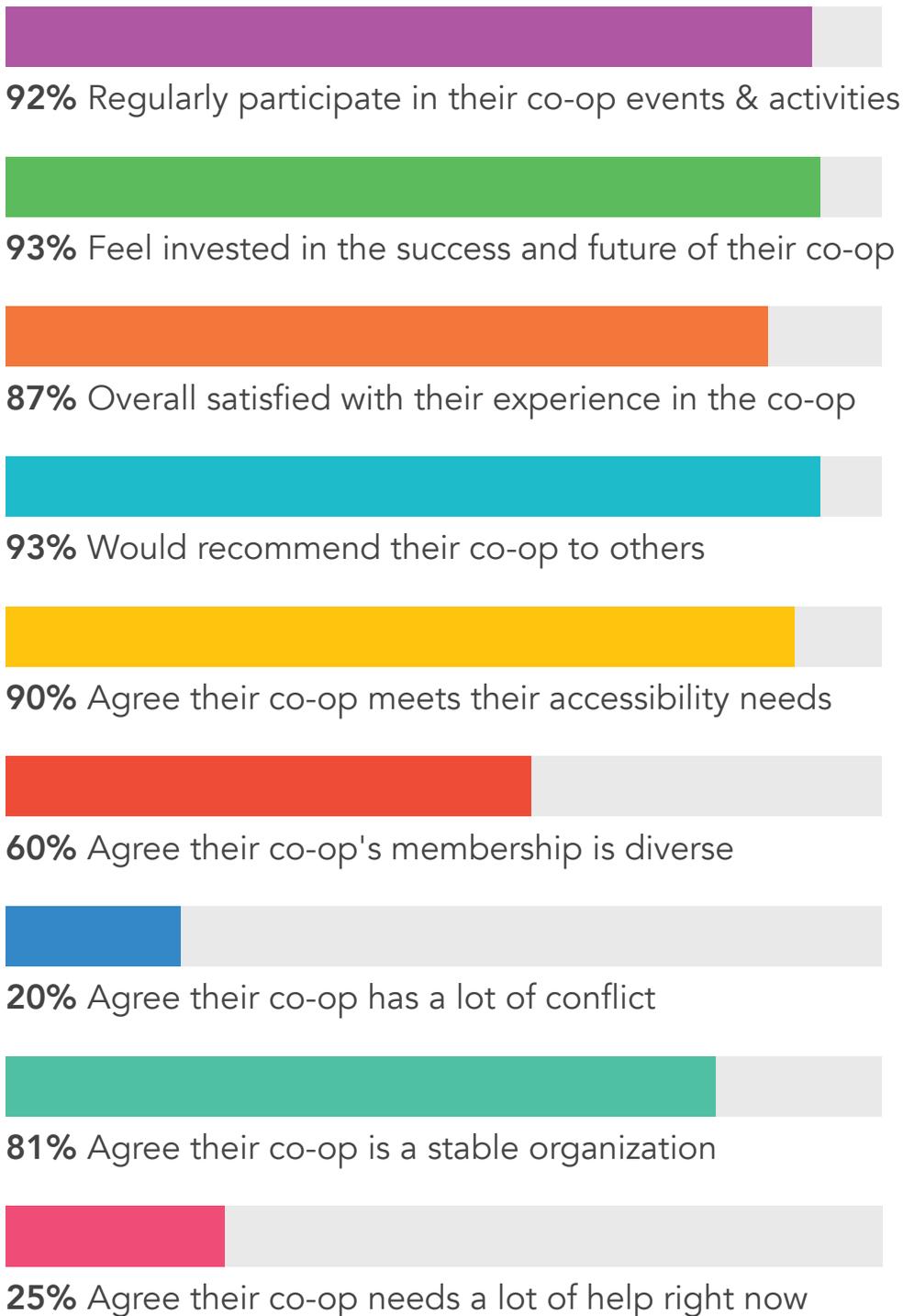
>40 years

Longest length of involvement

1 year

Average length of involvement

Member satisfaction



Did you know?

Co-op members who reported that their co-op does not meet their accessibility needs, isn't diverse, has a lot of conflict, isn't stable, and/or needs a lot of help are significantly less likely to participate in their co-op, feel invested in their co-op, feel satisfied with their co-op, and recommend their co-op to others. Members who are highly critical of their co-ops are also less likely to report that they will continue their involvement not just with their current co-op, but with any co-op in the future.

Common co-op struggles

Several co-ops are facing similar issues as well as unique situations. We are all part of a network that can learn from one another's challenges and successes.

Lack of training

- Technical training
- Anti-oppression and social justice
- Information about ADA
- Conflict mediation and restorative justice
- Mental health
- Maintenance
- Leadership and board training
- Decision making and governance
- Sustainability

Supporting members

- ADA accessibility
- Mental health
- Affordable housing
- Abuse, violence, and rape
- Sanctuary co-ops
- Children and families
- Supporting all ages
- Supporting non-students
- Substance free housing

Engaging members

- Apathy / engaging members
- Leadership and board training
- High turnover, low retention

Resources

- Need funding
- Need staff
- Buying homes
- Difficulty with loans
- Difficulty with zoning laws

Connecting to the co-op movement

- Want to know about other co-ops
- Want to stay in touch with other co-ops
- Want to visit other co-ops

We're here for you.

Any of these issues sound familiar? Don't despair! NASCO has decades of experience in supporting cooperatives through these commonly faced challenges.

NASCO offers trainings and resources on creating safer spaces, conflict resolution, and long term visioning. We also know that one co-op may have the answers to another co-op's questions. NASCO is a network that can help facilitate mutual aid- cooperation among cooperatives.

Check out pages 4-5 for a list of our programs and member benefits, all of which can help your co-op tackle these common co-op challenges!

Thank you for participating!

- Acorn Community
- Bitternut Collective
- Boulder Housing Coalition
- Campus Co-operative Residence Inc.
- Co-op Housing University of Maryland
- College Houses
- Community Housing Expansion of Austin
- Community of Urbana Cooperative Housing
- Cooperative Development Institute
- EcoReality Sustainable Land Use and Education Cooperative
- Evergreen Cooperative, Inc.
- Houseasaurus
- Houston Access to Urban Sustainability
- ICC Ann Arbor
- ICC Austin
- Kalamazoo Collective Housing
- Madison Community Cooperative
- The Midden
- MOSAIC
- MSU Student Housing Cooperative
- Neill-Wycik
- Nickel City Housing Cooperative
- Oberlin Student Cooperative Association
- Queen City Cooperative
- Qumbya Housing Cooperative
- River City Housing Cooperative
- Riverton Community Housing
- Saint Peace House
- Slade Ecological Cooperative
- Solar Community Housing Association
- Stewart Little Co-op
- Student Cooperative Association
- Student Cooperative Organization
- Students' Co-op / East River Cooperative
- The Beet Collective
- The Hive
- Turing Haus
- Unitarian Universalist Community Cooperatives
- University of Kansas Student Housing Association
- Waterloo Co-operative Residence Inc.
- Whitehall Cooperative

Don't see your co-op represented?

Fill out the survey next year!
We will be sending this year's surveys in August 2018.



"I love co-ops and I love my co-op!"

"Its my favorite thing about my life."

"Amazing, growing, full of energy."

"Co-ops changed my life."

"It's fun and welcoming."

"Challenging but rewarding experience."

"Literally the best thing in the world."

"I love everyone in my house and love all the benefits of co-op living."

"Love co-ops and appreciate the space we've created together."