



UHAB University is Back!

Venerable Affordable Housing Nonprofit Revives Popular Training Program to Strengthen HDFC Co-ops

May 6, 2016, New York City - "I didn't realize all the policies and dynamics that go into governing an HDFC co-op." This has been a common reaction among shareholders after completing UHAB University, the free leadership training series for residents of low-income Housing Development Fund Corporation cooperatives, also known as affordable, limited-equity, or shared-equity co-ops. Back by popular demand after an extended hiatus, UHAB U resumes on May 11th in West Harlem with a nine-session course.

The Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB) has guided some 1,600 buildings from failing rentals to healthy HDFC co-ops since 1973, helping residents of more than 30,000 apartments become homeowners. Although it is the outliers that often make the news, the vast majority of these multi-family buildings are successful. This is in large part because of UHAB "University" and other management, operations, and governance training services and resources that this nonprofit provides.

"Collaborating with low-income residents for more than 40 years has taught us that it isn't enough just to create these affordable co-ops," UHAB executive director Andrew Reicher said. "Ongoing training and technical assistance for the people in these buildings is what leads to the continued stability and affordability of these HDFCs. And improving low-income housing improves the city for residents of *all* incomes."

Taught in both English and Spanish, UHAB U is designed for HDFC shareholders who want to learn about everything from board development and their building's governing documents to budgeting and the proper procedures for handling repairs. After seven years of running the well-attended program, UHAB paused this series in 2013. We shifted the organization's training focus from strengthening buildings that were already co-ops to assisting those that were becoming co-ops. Now, with most of these 98 buildings having been successfully converted from troubled rentals to new affordable co-ops, we are resuming UHAB U, at the request of many residents.

Along with training, UHAB has been providing technical assistance to members of HDFC co-ops and tenant associations during thousands of site visits, phone consultations, and in-office meetings annually for many years. We

help bolster affordable co-ops, and buildings converting from distressed rentals, by educating residents about all facets of building management and co-op governance. We assist building leaders in creating sustainable policies (such as on resales and subletting), properly conducting elections, complying with the annual HDFC Regulatory Submission requirements of the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), crafting and adhering to annual budgets, resolving conflicts among residents, and developing effective boards and community-minded shareholders.

Under contracts with HPD, UHAB has provided much of its technical assistance free of charge to HDFC co-ops and TIL and ANCP buildings. As of November 2016, UHAB will no longer be under contract with HPD to offer free technical assistance. However, UHAB will continue delivering an array of free training courses, seminars, and other services as well as affordable technical assistance to HDFCs.

In addition to UHAB's trademark technical assistance and training, we will continue to help HDFC co-ops maintain or regain their financial and physical health by packaging loans for major systems upgrades and debt consolidation (such as overdue property taxes and water/sewer charges), monitoring annual elections, and assisting with bookkeeping, budgeting, applications for tax abatements, and revising governing documents.

We will also continue conducting Introduction to Limited-Equity Co-ops workshops for people interested in becoming homeowners, so that buildings with vacant apartments may draw from our rich pool of qualified applicants. UHAB's Fire and Liability Insurance Plan (FLIP) remains a popular cost-saving choice for more than 650 member co-ops (comprising more than 10,000 households) and many buildings streamline their financial records by using Connected Books, UHAB's online bookkeeping program.

In addition to working with existing affordable co-ops, we will continue to help residents of deteriorating rentals organize to stand up to negligent landlords to fight displacement and improve living conditions. Due to UHAB's organizing of the Crown Heights Tenant Union, for example, 62 families are still in their affordable Brooklyn apartments two years after their landlord began a brutal attempt to push them out by raising their rents more than 150%.

These and other UHAB success stories have broadened public awareness about affordable housing issues and solutions. As UHAB has done for more than four decades, this nonprofit continues adapting to the shifting affordable housing landscape to help ensure that more low-income residents can build the thriving communities that benefit all New Yorkers.

For more information about UHAB University, visit www.uhab.org/calendar.

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About the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB)

UHAB empowers low- to moderate-income residents to take control of their housing and enhance communities by creating strong tenant associations and lasting affordable co-ops.

www.uhab.org

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