

OSCA Co-op Information for New Students

Questions:
440-775-8108 or
osca@oberlin.edu

Oberlin Student Cooperative
Association
Oberlin College Wilder Hall
M.P.O. Box 118
Oberlin, OH 44074-0118

www.oberlin.edu/osca

The Oberlin Student Cooperative Association (OSCA) is an alternative to the College-sponsored dining and housing program. There are seven OSCA dining co-ops (Brown Bag, Fairchild, Harkness, Keep, Pyle Inn, Tank, and Third World), four of which are connected to housing co-ops (Harkness, Keep, Tank and Third World), and one housing-only co-op (Old Barrows).

OSCA offers significant savings over regular campus dining and housing. At the end of each school year, any leftover money is refunded to the membership.

OSCA 2018-19 Savings on Dining & Housing for New Students

| | OSCA | College | Savings |
|-------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Dining | \$3,900 | \$8,230 | \$4,330 |
| Double room | \$4,830 | \$8,108 | \$3,278 |
| Single room | \$6,000 | \$8,108 | \$2,108 |

Co-ops: We Own It !

OSCA rents its co-op buildings, so by “we own it”, we are referring to the fact that members take responsibility for all aspects of day-to-day operations and decision making. We determine how we live in our buildings, what food we eat, and we oversee all functions of the organization.

All-OSCA and individual co-op policies are determined democratically through a consensus-based process. Because the membership changes each semester, each co-op continually reinvents its policies to meet the needs, wants, and philosophies of the current community.

Co-ops: A Way of Life

The benefits of OSCA membership come with responsibility. Members of OSCA do all of the cooking, cleaning, food buying, composting, and other tasks within their individual co-ops. Each co-op decides at the beginning of each semester how much time members need to put in (usually about 4 to 5 hours a week). For those who hold jobs outside of the co-op, we offer “time aid” which reduces the number of co-op hours required for those members.

Since OSCA is a cooperative, you are expected to do more than just pay your board bill and do your jobs. You are responsible for participating in your co-op’s decision-making processes, as well as those of OSCA as a whole, and to be considerate of your fellow co-ops. Everyone being actively involved in the co-ops is the key to making everything work.

There are no meal cards or cafeteria trays in co-ops. Communal meals are prepared at least for lunch at 12:20 pm and dinner at 6:20 pm, and the kitchens are open 24/7 to accommodate everyone’s schedule. Guest policies are set by members so they can bring friends and professors to meals without a hassle. Many co-ops are vegetarian and vegan-friendly, and allergy awareness among the membership is always a priority.

What is Available

OSCA has a total membership of 583 students – 400 members dine in co-ops and 183 members both dine and live in co-ops. OSCA reserves 100 spaces for new students – 60 dining-only and 40 housing and dining.

Spaces in OSCA are assigned by random lottery. If you do not get a space at the beginning of the year, then you will be put on a wait list and will still have a good chance of getting into a co-op during the year. If you decide you want to join OSCA during the school year, you may sign up for the same wait list online. New members are admitted twice per month throughout the year as space allows.

How do I Apply?

More information about OSCA and the application for new students is available at OSCA’s web site, **www.oberlin.edu/osca**. If you have questions about any aspect of OSCA, call or e-mail us at the phone number and e-mail address provided.

Deadline is June 15 to participate in the OSCA new student lottery. Late applications will be put on the co-op new student wait list.

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The Co-ops

Although co-ops change their membership and their policies between years, each one forms a unique community.

Brown Bag Co-op (BBC) is the only grocery-style co-op in OSCA. Because of its unique set-up, BBC is only available to upperclass students who have been assigned “off-campus” or “village housing” status.

Fairchild (more colloquially known as “Fairkid”) is located in the basement of Fairchild residence hall; dining is open to students new to Oberlin College. Despite the relaxed atmosphere, Fairchild members are very passionate about their food politics, and strive to serve primarily vegan food that incorporates as many local and fair-trade elements as possible.

Harkness is described variously as colorful, nonconformist, and eclectic. “Harkies” are known for maintaining a vibrant and tight-knit community. With 42 housing members, Harkness is the largest housing co-op, and its dining co-op, which tends to have just over 100 members, serves primarily vegan food with vegetarian options. Students new to Oberlin who wish to dine in Harkness must live in Harkness as well.

Keep is known as one of the more energetic and enthusiastic co-ops in OSCA. It is also one of the most musical co-ops, with many a night filled with the sounds of banjo strumming wafting from the sprawling front porch. In addition, Keep is the home of the Bike Co-op, Oberlin’s co-op-run bicycle repair shop. Keep’s dining policies lean towards vegetarianism with the occasional meat dish. Students new to Oberlin who wish to dine in Keep must also live in Keep.

Old Barrows is one of the oldest co-ops in OSCA. “Old B” housing is a safe space for students who may feel oppressed due to their gender. The space serves primarily trans students, with a focus on trans women and trans feminine people. It also serves as a space for gender nonconforming people and other trans people (including non-binary people). Cis women are allowed into the house as the lowest priority, after trans people and gender nonconforming people. Housing membership is by

application. While members in Old B can dine in any co-op except BBC, students new to Oberlin College and living in Old B may only dine in Fairchild, Pyle, and Third World Co-ops.

Pyle, located on the bottom floor of Asia House, comprises over 100 members. Conveniently located in the middle of campus, and slightly further north than most co-ops, it serves primarily vegetarian food with some meat as well, depending on who’s cooking. Members of Pyle are also known for lively meal-time discussions and their weekly theme meals. Dining in Pyle is open to students new to Oberlin College.

Tank’s 82 members (known affectionately as “Tankers”) enjoy a primarily vegetarian diet, with some meat. Tankers often congregate on the porch and lawn when the weather is nice. Tank also hosts an annual pig roast in the Spring, a tradition that brings many OSCA members to enjoy good times and good company. With 41 dining-only members, students new to Oberlin and dining in Tank must also live in Tank.

Third World Co-op (TWC) is a safe space for Persons of Color, low-income students, international students, and first-generation college students. It is a community that promotes coalition-building through work and dialogue among people of different cultural, socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds. The mélange of different cultural foods and styles of cooking has earned TWC a reputation of having some of the best food on campus. Membership is by application, and dining is open to students new to Oberlin College.

Independent Co-op

Kosher Halal (KHC) is a proud interfaith co-op that is not governed by OSCA. It is a community that follows Jewish and Muslim dietary laws while facilitating interfaith cooperation, education, and friendship at Oberlin. Members are Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, non-religious, and so much more, and come together every day for laughter, learning, and above all, good eating.

If you are interested in dining in KHC, send e-mail to khc.oberlin@gmail.com.