

**Shambhala Collective**

*Community Of Light and Love Eco Colony in Tennessee & Intentional Village Environment*  
**Community Guidelines** updated 5.28 2026

**Mission Statement**

*It is our intention To encourage, foster, and educate on community-style living and permaculture-sustainable practices for long-term success and self-reliance. We intend and expect to leave the land and space better than how we found it. Our primary focuses are on community, sustainability, land stewarding, and self-sufficiency. Our primary goals are to be 80-100% off-grid by 2028 with solar, wind, and other alternatives of power; for our gardens to produce 75-100% of our food by 2028; and to be a zero-waste community, with a strong focus on reducing and eliminating waste through best practices, composting, reusing and recycling.*

**Assumptions**

Shambhala is a living entity and these guidelines are subject to change and will be updated annually for the first 5 years, and from then on, decided upon regularity. Please make sure your guidelines are up to date.

**Intention**

To encourage, foster, and educate on community-style living and permaculture sustainable practices for long-term success and self-reliance. We intend and expect to leave the land and space better than how we found it.

**Community Size**

35-40 acres

9 full-time member families = no more than 24 full time residents with max 9 home dwelling units  
Up to 4 seasonal interns/WOOFers at any given time, and 12-15 throughout the year  
Maximum 12 semi-permanent structures (homes and community buildings) that offer little to no disruption of the land.

**Sustainability**

Goal to be 80-100% off-grid by 2028 with solar, wind, and other alternative energy production.

Goal for gardens is to produce 75-100% of food by 2028

Zero-waste community, with a strong focus on reducing and eliminating waste through best practices, composting, reusing, and recycling

**Accessibility and Universal Design**

Our community is committed to making this space 100% accessible to ADA standards and Universal Design. All gardens, common dwellings, and equipment are universally designed and accessible to all residents and visitors. Individual homes are encouraged but not required to be accessible.

### **Community Lifestyle and Values (defined in membership agreement document)**

- Co-Op land - We are the stewards of Mother Earth, and collectively and cooperatively care for her
- Education center - it's our goal to help educate the general public on regenerative and renewable resources and teach sustainability, homesteading, and care of the land and each other
- Internships - We seek to have summer internships and volunteer-based programs to garner help with growing our farming practices
- Permaculture organic regenerative gardening - we choose to use these gardening practices
- Primarily plant-based culture - we aim to be a plants-first collective, with a minor focus on animal husbandry seeking to raise animals for working the land and humane practices. Currently, our collective agrees that any animal harvesting will need to be done off-site.
- Diversity - we choose to have no religious affiliation and aim for cultural, religious, age, sex, and value diversity
- Unity - we have an all-for-one mentality, in which our collective is unified for the greater cause of education, sustainability, and legacy
- Inclusivity - our community is inclusive to all but not at the risk of safety or integrity
- Equality - members have equal voting rights and responsibilities to the entirety
- Respect - we foster respect for all opinions, differences, communication, and culture, and work to understand these differences as our strengths.
- Clear and Purposeful - we encourage a clear, purposeful and "addiction-free" experience on Shambhala and have zero tolerance for hard drugs and abuse. If a member chooses to partake in alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco, we request that it is done respectfully and privately so as not to influence, disturb, or disrupt the shared community spaces, and doing so does not lead to public intoxication. We also request no smoking around volunteers or children under 18. There will be no growing of illegal substances on premises to protect the collective.
- Our collective is still in discussion on guns and hunting, but currently we take the pacifist stance and request guns to be locked up and no used on site.

We encourage each member to do the deep work required to hold to these values, both individually and together.

### **Membership**

To become a member of Shambhala, members must go through our application process, which includes a 6-month trial, background check, multiple visits and zooms, and references.

Members are approved by consensus with an equity membership. (see **Prospective Members and Future Member Agreements** below for more)

Members' home structures are the financial responsibility of each member/family and can be community-built. Membership and land stewardship are separate categories.

Members have equal voting rights on community decisions. Members share responsibility for all projects and farming practices. Each member is required to be a part of at least one community committee and take the lead on at least one community project.

Years one to five projects and committees can include:

Orchards, gardens and plant selection, Tower Gardens/Greenhouse, Barns/ farm structures, community kitchen/building, springs and pump houses, trail crew, grounds crew, grants and funding, marketing and recruiting, orientation and integration, community training on communication, safety, wellness and health care, internship, and volunteer program, waste and zero waste (composting, recycling, waste), road maintenance.

Official committees will be named and formed by year five.

### **Dwelling structures**

Shambhala acreage is collectively/socially owned/shared, this is not a traditional acre-allotment per household, but a shared entirety for the collective. Home design and colors need to be agreed upon by the collective, and should be eco-designed with minimal impact, with natural colors that blend into the natural landscape, and don't disrupt the natural environment. Living dwelling structures can be built up to 1200 square feet (but preferably much smaller) and should include sustainable features such as gray water systems and renewable energy systems. The building site (indoor and outdoor space total per homesite) can be designed up to 2000 square feet, (but again preferably much smaller, think tiny homes). This sqft-age does not include garden space.

Home type examples: yurts, tiny homes, cob homes, earth ships, modular eco homes, geodesic domes, wood cabins, tee-pees, campers (without hookups), and wall tents. (Due to high humidity, home structures must be evaluated and pre-treated and/or cleaned regularly for mold and mildew prevention.) Alternative home types not mentioned above are open for discussion and consideration and will be agreed upon by the collective.

Minimum requirements for homes: water collection and responsible grey water dispersement, no black water / composting toilets, solar electricity or propane generator.

Community Energy consumption: any on-grid homes will be assessed for their energy consumption annually and will be encouraged and supported by the community to maintain and achieve the lowest levels of energy consumption because energy costs are divided evenly through the collective. Once off-grid, the source of energy and amounts of energy will be maintained and updated by the Energy Committee.

**Noise ordinance** - 9 pm to 8 am no loud music, noisy construction, mechanical equipment operation, or other disruptive activity within these hours. (Special Events will be evaluated and times may be extended.)

### **Ideal community member qualities**

Approachable, open-minded, open-hearted, compassionate, empathetic, responsible, strong work ethic, integrity, resilient, able to give and receive, emotionally intelligent, deep listening, committed to personal growth, open to a child-like curiosity, playful, respectful, generous, for the whole - not the self, able to tolerate, welcome and encourage differences of opinion and values.

### **Communication expectations**

Our collective encourages and fosters heart-centered conversation and we seek to cultivate, develop and maintain a gentle, open, and loving behavior of communication and conversation. Working at the heart level is precious, rich, and complex, and we want every member to feel valued, heard, and loved. Members are expected to be willing to do the work to continue to grow into the best versions of themselves, and will always be supported with tools and workshops to do so. Members are also expected to be “fully present” for meetings and deep discussions about Shambhala – emotionally, physically, spiritually and mentally present for such. All meetings will start with a heart-centered meditation to join the collective in intention.

Our priorities: is the member happy? Is the community happy? Relationships are the lifeblood of the community and are fostered and nurtured here.

### **Marketing for Members**

We aim to have a smooth membership flow, designed by and managed by our Marketing and Member Acquisition Committee. In years one through five, we seek up to nine family units to help share the land purchase cost and development of the community gardens, with no more than 24 residents (subject to change).

In time, we aim to have a waiting list of members seeking to live on Shambhala, so that we will always have enough members to carry the community forward, and can perhaps expand into surrounding land acreage.

It is up to the Marketing Committee’s discretion on how to carry this forward, and this committee will develop a Goal and Timeline Plan for these goals.

### **Prospective Members**

To get a feel of our community lifestyle, values, and ethics, interested members are encouraged to:

- Tour our community with a founding member
- Attend a community meeting (either on-site or virtually) as a silent observer, with a follow-up meeting with 2 or more members to discuss questions and observations
- Attend a community meal to meet all members
- Read all community documents
- Watch community videos (member videos on why I joined, what is the community, etc)

### **Future Member Assessments**

The Collective can choose to use membership assessment practices such as BANK Code,

Enneagram, Myers Briggs, DISC, Color Code, Clifton Strengths, etc., to learn more about the prospective members' learning and communication styles. The goal is to best engage and build on members' strengths and understand differences. There is no right answer to these assessments, nor do we seek a certain type of assessment. They are merely to help understand each member on a deeper level during the introduction and integration process.

References will be requested and background checks will be utilized during the application process as a means to ensure safety and integrity. Cost for background checks is the applicant's responsibility.

### **Future member agreements**

New members have a 6-month integration period in which the member and community can see if the connection is a good fit. We encourage questions and open communication during this period for new members and existing members to get to know one another on a deeper level to ensure integration and cohesive living.

Future members are expected to bring their own temporary housing (camper, wall or bell tent, tiny home on wheels, etc).

At the beginning of this integration period, prospective members will pay \$500/month contribution to help cover food and infrastructure costs during their integration. At the end of the 6-month period, if a member decides this community is not a good fit, they can part ways with the non-permanent resources they came with.

During this period, a new member is expected to attend, at minimum, 50% of the weekly community dinners in each of those 6 months to establish a connection with other members, as well as to attend 4 or more of the monthly meetings, with rights to contribute, but not vote on major decisions, and to be on-property 75+% of the time during this period to properly experience the community life. While travel is encouraged and welcomed, participation in our community is an expectation of the Shambhala Collective and is particularly important during the integration period of a member's residency.

After the 6-month integration period, the new member has the choice to purchase into the equity membership and build or purchase an existing home.

During the developmental years of Shambhala, there can be two types of membership integration: virtual and physical. If the prospective member/s choose virtual, they are still expected to visit Shambhala at least 2x per year to establish relationships with members, and are still expected to contribute financially to the major projects. (More needed on other requirements for equity.)

When new members have lived on site thru their 6mos trial period, as soon as they pay deposit or in full for their membership, they will be considered members and added to the LLC.

If a member hasn't lived on site during their trial period, and they are using the payment plan, then they will become a member (added to the LLC and able to vote) after 6 months of payments (and deposit) are paid.

During our founders phase, all founders will be added to the bank accounts, and once we have more members and decide upon committees, the board members who are chosen to will form the finance committee will be on the bank accounts.

Membership payments are considered for land sites/ homestead. They are separate from voting rights. Each adult has a right to vote on decisions for the community. Aging children are considered adult at 18 years old, and able to vote on decisions.

### **Community Engagement**

Each member is expected to engage in all aspects of our community; with varying personality types, individuals can choose how this looks for them. We encourage a balance in engagement and participation, creating compassion, inclusiveness, love, balance, and ease. Continue reading for these engagement expectations:

### **Community / Shared Meals (Once fully established)**

We will have weekly community potluck dinners, and all members are encouraged but not required to attend. We also encourage shared meals of all types daily, in our community-dwelling space(s).

We also aim to have nine monthly community meals (March-November) which a different member/family hosts and provides the food, although all members may assist in harvesting and cooking this meal provided that the majority of all of the food can be picked on site. These community-fed meals aren't expected until gardens are in full production, and until then potlucks are encouraged. Members are requested to RSVP so the proper amounts are made to avoid waste.

All communal meals are encouraged to be shared in community, in the community kitchen, or in a member's home, to maintain connection and cohesiveness throughout the community.

### **Community Work Hours**

Each member is required to spend a minimum of 5 hours per week (TBD and evolving as the community grows) on the community projects, gardens, and systems. These hours can be based on skillset or learned, we will provide an example list of these tasks as the community develops.

Each member will use the community Workshare Tracking sheet for accountability and tracking hours for the community's use to assess how many hours are given collectively to help with funding and internship acquisition in the years to come.

**Food Share**

All food on Shambhala is shared equally. Harvests will be divided evenly, and if any member needs extra food, it will be given, if there is extra to give. It is our aim to have more food than needed and to sell, trade or donate the excess.

**Farming Manual and Standards**

All members must adhere to the Shambhala Collective's Organic - non-GMO farming practices and standards on which we are founded. The collective will create manuals for operating procedures and guidelines once needed.

**Minimum Community members on site**

Our community uses a shared travel calendar to ensure there is a minimum number of members on site to help keep the community and projects flowing and growing.

Minimums should be 20% (but no less than 2 people on site) of the whole, for up to 2 weeks. IE if members A and B are the only members on-site, they will be relieved of or assisted (offered a break) after 2 weeks of communal chores. This may evolve or change as the community does.

Farming chores will be expanded upon and written as needed as the community grows into fruition.

**Community Meetings**

Members are required to attend 80% of all Committee meetings in order to keep our community development plan on track and the voting consensus fair. Meetings are held monthly with an additional annual review of the Collective to assess the year's progress and financials, current and upcoming projects and funding, and to vote on any revisions or changes needed in appropriate documents and practices as growth occurs. All meeting minutes will be held in the cloud for review by all members.

**Equity Membership/ Buy-in**

Shambhala is a Co-Operative equity membership LLC, and each member has rights to the shared property holdings and voting rights to all decisions.

Buy-in costs for members are to share the initial land costs (\$196,000), infrastructure costs (electric, community building, community solar, road, pond, spring upgrades, well, etc)(\$41,282), legal and business setup costs, website, and any marketing efforts. See Shambhala Financials for history, annual costs and estimations.

Buy-ins are set on a sliding scale to balance out the input levels for startup, infrastructure, risk, etc. As of 2025, the buy-ins are \$34,000 - \$39,000 for the remaining six additional members (of 9 individuals or families total) which includes \$5000 towards Shambhala's capital fund account for maintenance, projects and other costs.

If a new member needs a payment plan for their dues, Shambhala is labeled as the “lending bank.” and divided the total amount to 60 payments or 5 years, with 3% interest. They will be required to pay a downpayment of 20% to secure their membership, and then can choose to pay either monthly or quarterly the remaining. The collective prefers the setup of automatic withdrawal from member’s bank directly to Shambhala’s bank (Eastman Credit Union), but is open to checks or cash so long as payments remain timely and consistent.

The collective members may eventually receive “Co-Op refunds” starting year 5 of any on-site shared businesses that generate income. They can choose to roll these refunds back into the collective or cash out. (TBD)

During the establishment of Shambhala, prospective members will pay a non-refundable deposit that will cover temporary housing if they do not bring their own (such as a bell or wall tent) and this housing will be returned to Shambhala once a member builds their own dwelling. Prospective members are expected to pay a monthly rent while they are living on Shambhala to cover infrastructure costs, food, and impact on the land. Amount is to be decided upon for each situation as they vary (initially decided upon as \$500, but until we have food production the group agrees that’s too high). These rental payments will be rolled into their membership if they choose to join, and are otherwise non refundable if they don’t.

### **Defaulting on payments**

If a member is unable to pay their monthly membership plan (if using payment plan method), a one-month grace period may be permitted, subject to approval by other members per individual’s circumstances. This month’s payment would be tacked on to the end of their payment 60 month period (not wholly forgiven). If payment defaults continue for 3-6 months, members will vote on grounds for removal, or other solutions. Fees for late payments will be \$20 per late amount, with subject to increase based on tardiness and repetitiveness.

### **Annual Assessments**

All members split ongoing costs to cover basic maintenance of the community (community buildings, utilities, basic supplies, equipment, etc) (see financials). These can be paid in one lump sum, quarterly, or monthly. There will be an agreement signed for accountability on payment options.

### **Buy-out**

Shambhala buy-outs for equity memberships will be allowed after full realization of the community to allow the community time to generate a strong financial foundation. (Estimated 5 years minimum.)

Current land costs and estimations will determine the buy-out amount and members will have an inspection of the home to assess value and quality. We are a leave-no-trace community, and expect our community members to leave the space better than when they entered.

A member can sell their home back to Shambhala if funds allow or a loan can be obtained, or an existing member and/or the Shambhala Collective can find a prospective member to purchase the home. Prospective members must be vetted and approved by the Collective, per the 12-month integration period.

Only one member can initiate the buy-out process at any given time (so as to not incur major loss or unnecessary burden to the community's financials). The next buy-out process begins as soon as a new member is decided upon or 12 months have passed.

### **Quick-sale contingencies**

If a member is in an emergency financial state, Shambhala Collective will assess on a case-by-case basis.

### **Involuntary Removal**

If a member has not fulfilled their membership responsibilities for 3 months (with the exception of cases of illness or emergency), causes considerable disruption to the community, or commits a crime of any kind on or off-site, they are subject to involuntary removal, decided upon by the collective.

Equity membership and home ownership can be revoked if a member has caused a financial burden to the collective through legal fees, damage, or loss, decided upon by the collective.

Within reason, land share and home value will be returned to the member minus any costs the collective has endured, and the community has 12 months to find another member or buy out the member if funds are in place.

**Grounds for removal:** Grossly violating the member contract, physical fighting, aggression, bullying, intimidation, excessive or disrespectful language, theft, hoarding of food, not making payments on their membership over an extended period of time, vandalism, a crime of any kind, drug or alcohol manufacturing or sale, excessive use and abuse of substances, ignoring or disrespecting guidelines and community rules, disregard for community safety, excessive or disrespectful use or care of community property, and disrespect to Mother Earth.

### **Course of action:**

1. Communal is called to discuss
2. Warning is issued
3. Members may defend their case to communal
4. If the collective is rendered unsafe by members, the outside police may be called
5. At least 3 members must agree to have the police on site
6. Member conflict resolution protocols

For all disagreements and disputes or Interpersonal conflicts we encourage Member Conflict Resolution:

Individual communication, with founder mediation if needed; formal complaints are submitted to the membership board; mediation; conflict consultation; legal action is our last resort.

### **Membership aging in place and illness**

The Shambhala Collective encourages aging in place and the natural care of its members. Members are encouraged to share in the care of their aging members, but if additional nursing care is needed the collective can decide how to use collective funding for it. If the costs are more than the community can support, the member may have to sell their share and move off-site to get the care they need. This can be a case-by-case decision or updated into the guidelines to protect the financial collective. This will be added to as needed based on legal advice, but know this topic is very important to us, and we know that most members will want to age in place on Shambhala.

### **Member Death**

Home value and land share value can be willed to a descendent and sold or entered into a probationary period if the beneficiary desires to live in the community, however, Membership cannot be willed to a non-member descendent – inheriting family will enter into the pre-described membership process, and probationary members are expected to earn the right to be a member through relationship building and work hours. If inheriting family does not wish to be a member, there is a 12-month grace period to decide upon the Buy-Out strategy.

If the beneficiary is already a member, property and land share can be willed but does not affect voting amounts. Voting percentages are singular by the ratio of person-to-collective only (IE if there are 20 resident members, each member has a 1 in 20 vote for decisions whether they have 1 or more homes and land shares on site).

### **Residents living with Members**

We expect children and aging families to be residents of Shambhala. Membership is connected to voting rights and financial buy-in, still to be determined.

### **Governance**

The Shambhala Collective is consensus-based governance modeled after the Sociocracy/Quaker style of governing and is defined here as a society of friends who work together employing the community values in collaborative decision-making, primarily simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship.

Sociocracy is a system of governance that seeks to create psychologically safe environments and productive organizations. It draws on the use of consent, rather than majority voting, in discussion and decision-making by people who have a shared goal or work process.

Meeting time limits and speaking limits: when sharing ideas and thoughts, our system is to allow each person to speak for 3 minutes, uninterrupted and focused on the Shambhala techniques of the prayer circle, with all members intently listening and engaging and sending energy to the person speaking. Each member will offer their view during the first round, choosing to engage

only if desired. After round one through the circle, each member may raise their hand to give input, and we do not interrupt someone while they are speaking so as to let them complete their thoughts and ideas fully.

For these collective meetings, there is a chosen “Meeting Ambassador” to help facilitate these guidelines of communication, and this position rotates each quarter.

#### Board seats & terms

Phase One Founding members are defined as the members who established the Shambhala collective in year 1 (Kennedy & Lacey).

#### **Economies**

Income generated from educational programming and farm sales is first returned to the operations account to fund all garden and community needs, payroll of garden management, and co-operative staff, if any.

At the end of each year, coop dividends and refunds will be returned to each member for overages, to be decided upon in year one.

#### **Financials**

Community-related costs are carried by the Shambhala Collective Co-operative  
See Shambhala Financials

#### **Capital improvements**

If there are improvements that have to be done that are outside of scope and allowance of Shambhala’s budget and granting opportunities, the community members are responsible for sharing these costs.

#### **Visitation**

All guests are to be respectful of the privacy of all members and are expected to abide by the community rules and guidelines of Shambhala. They are invited to attend weekly community meals and their host will be responsible for any additional costs incurred if any. They are invited to attend one community meeting as a silent observer.

Personal guests staying in RVs or Tents: Until provisions are made for RV waste, no RV waste is allowed on property, and water consumption rules will be added to these guidelines when worked out. RV and tent locations will be decided upon by the collective and as above, all guests are to respect community guidelines and member privacy.

Guests can stay for up to 1 week without shared hours or 2 to 4 weeks with 5 hours of community work hours or monetary equivalent. Guests staying longer than 1 month must be approved by the collective, and scheduled accordingly so the maximum number of residents isn’t exceeded. No guests are allowed if members are not present.

Residents will use a scheduling calendar for ensuring the number of guests is below the maximum number of residents on property rule.

The Shambhala Collective is currently deciding the terms of short-term rentals of member homes or community shared housing as “farm stay experiences” for learning and working visitors. Currently proposed: 3 days maximum, guests will not consume the food stores (not living food), and will be expected to put in at least one work hour into the community in some way. No “renters” are allowed if there is only one member on-site at any time.

### **Disruption and Safety**

To bring the county sheriff on site, at least 3 members must agree if this is needed - unless it is an emergency for health or safety. (EG if it is a member dispute or accusation.)

Any member can call Fire and Ambulance for emergencies.

Member-to-member disputes will be settled by the community council and follow the dispute protocol for resolution.

There are no open fires allowed on Shambhala outside of the communal fire ring to fire prevention and safety. The use of above-ground, non-permanent fire cauldrons with lids or chimineas is permitted at individual home sites.

### **LLC / Land CoOp**

Shambhala Collective

Our land is sacred and communal. Each member owns rights to the entire property, votes on all decisions, and puts in live-work hours in gardens and community projects.

The following are topics being established/developed currently and in the future.

- Insurance
- Protection
- Food growth
- Board and terms
- Cross over roles (examples):

### **501c3 / Education Center**

#### **Shambhala Permaculture**

Operating ED is SC board president, termed

Operating PD is SC board vice president, termed

Operating MD is SC secretary

The financial director is treasurer, manages funding and grants

Operating Farm Manager is a paid position, can be live-work trade or partial trade

Operating Education Director can be the same as a Farm manager or an additional paid position

- **Programs** - day, week, month, seasonal
  - Retreats
  - Live work vacations
  - Internships
  - Max # of people on the property (in relation to toilets)
  - Max # of dwellings on the property

This document is subject to change, please make sure you have the latest copy.

Update March 2026