

# An Opportunity to Build Our Union's Power

## **Why is TAAAC considering purchasing a new, larger building?**

Your TAAAC Board of Directors is recommending to your Building Reps that they approve the purchase of a new building because it is clear that we have outgrown our current space. We could hire a new staffer right now but do not have an extra office for them. We only have 2 meeting rooms: 1 can hold 20 people and the other 10. The pace of technological change has made the current office insufficient: only 1 room allows for hybrid meetings which causes scheduling conflicts when we have more than 1 meeting at the same time.

## **What would a new, larger building allow us to do?**

A new, larger building would provide opportunities for more flexibility with scheduling meetings, events, and activities. We could hold larger gatherings that could include 50 or even 100 members. We could even host our monthly hybrid Rep Assembly in our own space and be more efficient in running it: we would have better audio, internet, and tech set-up to facilitate better online participation. We could also host events for the larger community to bring in our union siblings and community allies. And we could hire the staff we need to support all of these union efforts!

## **Why not just renovate the current space?**

Before we invest hundreds of thousands of dollars into renovations, our union must consider this: are we planning for the status quo or for the future? The current renovation plans only allow enough offices for currently budgeted staff with no ability to add more staff later. Additionally, the plans do not allow for larger meetings of even 40 people (even if we could revise these plans to accommodate more, there would not be enough parking).

## **How does a new, larger building help improve educators' working conditions?**

If we want to build our union's power, then we need space for community and collaboration. Only by building solidarity between members can we form the connections and relationships we need for us to fight together to win. A larger space also allows for opportunities for strategic planning and member training as well as community and union networking: all necessary to build the campaigns we need to win on the most pressing issues we face.

## **Will we need to raise dues to make this purchase?**

NO! We will NOT need to raise our dues. We are very fortunate to have enough money in savings to buy and renovate this building AND still have a reserve fund that is over a year's worth of our operating budget. In the proposed FY26 TAAAC budget, we were able to include anticipated increased costs if this were to happen and still work within our means.

## **Is this a fiscally sound decision?**

We are in a very enviable position. Based on our current financial analysis, we have the resources to purchase a new building with no mortgage and make the necessary renovations without taking out a loan while still maintaining reserve funds to cover over a year's worth of our operating budget. Anticipating the increased costs in taxes, condo fees,

and utilities of a new building, we can still work within our means to cover these costs while working within our current operating budget.

### **Has TAAAC considered other properties besides the one currently under consideration?**

Currently, there are only 6 additional properties for sale in the entire county that are similar to the type of building we would need and each has limitations. The type of property that we are looking for is both sought after and limited: it is owner-occupied, around 10,000 square feet, and has a large number of parking spaces. Most properties have 3 or fewer spaces/1000 sq ft and we need more than that. The current property we are looking at has 5 spaces/1000 sq ft, which is hard to come by.

Our real estate agents gave us an example: right now there is a primary care physicians group that has been looking for 5 years to find a property in the county that is similar to the one we need (owner-occupied w/high capacity parking and around the same sq ft) and they haven't been able to find anything despite their urgency to expand to a larger space to accommodate patient needs.

### **Beyond offices and meetings rooms, what could YOU imagine we use this space for?**

#### **What would bring YOU into our union building?**

Let's think of the possibilities! Right now we're in the imagining stage as we consider possible renovations if we move forward with this purchase. Remember your union building is for YOU. It is your union home. We want it to be a gathering place for members to build community and provide ways to support them personally and professionally. Here are just some of the ideas brainstormed recently that we could have in a larger union space:

- 1) having space for members to work remotely on telework days
- 2) having space so we could offer child care opportunities during meetings/events
- 3) having a large storage area where we collect school supplies from retiring members so early career educators can gather supplies for their classrooms
- 4) having a "make-and-take" center for members to create posters, color print outs, and other things for their classrooms
- 5) a professional and union lending library
- 6) a small gym that members could use
- 7) space for wellness activities like yoga
- 8) a casual space for book and discussion groups to meet
- 9) a kitchen for social events and gatherings
- 10) a meeting room/office for our TAAAC-R (retired) members to meet and gather
- 11) having a maker space for members to be creative with provided technology and tools (3D printers, sewing machines, cricut cutting machines, art supplies, etc)
- 12) offering classes in the maker space
- 13) hosting resource fairs with vendors who could offer discounts to educators
- 14) hosting movie or game nights
- 15) hosting PD opportunities to help support early career educators
- 16) hosting professional learning communities around topics they want to learn more about to improve their skills as an educator