



# Sharing your Housing Plan

**Creating a housing plan is a bit like writing a book. If you don't share it with people, they will never know about the great plan you created... and if they don't know, they can't help you. There are several people it is wise to share your housing plan with.**

## Planning with a Circle of Support

In your Housing Plan you created a relationship circle where you mapped out the different people and supports in your life – family and relatives, friends and acquaintances, current paid supports, and free and funded community supports. When you look at your circle are there people you would like to help you with your housing plan? Is it time to bring them together to share your ideas and get their ideas? A Circle of Support can help you create your housing vision, assist you as you develop a plan, and then help you with steps you need to take to implement your plan and make your vision a reality.

## Planning Ahead for Housing

The earlier you can start planning for your housing, the better. In many areas of B.C. housing is expensive so you may need to start saving or get on a list for subsidized housing. This can take a few years. You will want to have some discussions with members of your Circle of Support to understand how they may be able to help. For example, does a relative or friend have a suite they would rent you? Do members of your Circle of Support know someone who is looking for a roommate? Members of your Circle of Support also have friends and acquaintances – ask them to use their networks to help you with your housing plan.

## Financial Planning

For anyone, planning a move into a new home means thinking about how they will pay for it. If you or your family start saving when you are very young you will be in a better position financially and have more housing choices available to you. Once you have created your housing plan, you will need to talk to your Circle of Support about what you can afford. They might even suggest sharing your plan with a Financial Advisor to help you save more money. If you haven't applied for the RDSP (Registered Disability Savings Plan), that would be a good first step. In any case, financial planning is an important aspect of planning for inclusive housing so it is important to have discussions about what funds you will need.

## Planning Ahead for Supports

Most people with developmental disabilities who live in inclusive housing, need some supports and services – provided by family and friends, using community resources and/or with paid supports through Community Living BC (CLBC) or others. It is important that the timing of housing and supports align so that you have the home and the supports at the same time. If you will be relying on the support of friends and family, you will need to determine who will help you with what and think about when you need the supports. If you are seeking support from CLBC, this means planning well in advance of when you will



need them. CLBC does not pay for housing, only for services. Individuals who want to rent or own their home are expected to pay for their housing costs, including things like rent, mortgage and down payments, utilities, deposits, strata fees, property taxes, insurance, home maintenance, etc.

Let your CLBC Facilitator know your vision for a home, including when you hope to move, several years in advance. Talk to them about the various options and things you should consider. If you are thinking about homeownership it is important that you discuss this with your local CLBC office early so you can make informed decisions. For example, if you are thinking about renting a room in your home to a roommate to help pay for your home are you prepared to be a landlord and familiarize yourself with the rights of tenants? Whether you plan to rent or own by yourself or you want to share housing with someone else who is CLBC-eligible, have you considered how CLBC's prioritization process (the process CLBC uses to decide who needs services most urgently) might impact support services or who your potential roommates can be? A discussion with your Facilitator may reveal new opportunities and factors you should consider in your planning.

Beyond housing, Facilitators help people connect to community resources and to services. If you have not done so already, register to take one of CLBC's Welcome Workshops to learn about planning, resources in your community and CLBC services. After that, meet with you CLBC Facilitator to talk about the community resources and services you will need. That way if they become aware of opportunities for housing (for example, a new housing development), they will know of your plans in order to connect you. Check-in with your Facilitator at least once a year to let them know if anything has changed in your housing plan and what steps you have taken towards your goal of living in inclusive housing. If, for example, you have learned some new skills or have heard something from BC Housing, you should share that information with your Facilitator.

## Adapting to Changes in Your Housing Plan

Creating a housing plan is a bit like doing a puzzle – you have to put a lot of small pieces together. When you have a lot of different steps to take, however, things don't always go as planned. These could be things like:

- A potential roommate changes their mind about moving in together
- You get a job in a different community
- Your savings aren't as much as you thought they would be
- A friend suddenly has a basement suite available for rent
- Your Financial Plan needs to be adjusted
- BC Housing does not yet have a subsidized apartment for you
- You feel you have some more skills to learn
- CLBC is not able to pay for supports this year
- An old friend expresses an interest in you sharing their home
- Rents in the area you like have gone up
- One of your siblings moves back to your community and offers to share housing with you

Change is part of life and it is an important skill to be able to adapt to change. If you can adapt and change your plans for housing, you will be better prepared to adapt to change when you have moved into your new home. In any case, if you have to or want to make changes to your housing plan, be sure to discuss the changes with members of your Circle of Support and share them with your Facilitator, and, if applicable, with your Financial Advisor or with BC Housing.