

## THE CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING DISABILITY TRUST



### What is the Disability Trust?

The Disability Trust is a program administered by the Community Housing Land Trust Foundation to help people with disabilities who can't pay for their shares when they move into housing co-ops. The Trust provides loans with no fees or interest to qualified beneficiaries.

### History of the Trust

Columbia Housing established the Disability Trust in 1982 and was responsible for its administration before transferring that responsibility to the Community Housing Land Trust Foundation in 1998. The Trust was set up because the co-op housing sector was building wheelchair accessible units, only to find that the people who needed them could not afford to pay the share purchase required for co-op membership. (Since then, the definition of disability has been expanded to include any permanent physical or psychological disability.)

Since its inception in 1982, the Disability Trust has helped more than 190 people move into housing co-ops by providing loans totaling over \$156,000. Most of these funds have been raised by donations from individuals, housing co-ops and organizations developing or providing services to housing co-ops who have traditionally risen to the occasion to ensure adequate funding for this program.

### Who Can Apply for a Loan?

In order to be eligible for a Disability Trust loan, applicants must meet three criteria:

- they must be accepted as a member of a non-profit housing co-op in BC
- they must have a permanent disability
- they must demonstrate financial need

### How Does the Trust Work?

1. Either the co-op or the member contacts the Disability Trust for an application form.
2. Both the member and the co-op fill out the application and submit it to the Disability Trust.
3. The application is reviewed for eligibility and completeness. If the member qualifies for a loan (and there is money available to lend), contracts are prepared and mailed to the co-op.
4. When signed contracts are received by the Trust, a cheque is sent directly to the co-op on behalf of the member.
5. All loans are interest-free and are repayable over five years. After an initial grace period, the beneficiary makes small monthly repayments to the co-op who submits a cheque to the Disability Trust annually on his or her behalf. The current loan maximum is \$1150 for applicants who qualify for Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance's co-op housing share purchase supplement and \$2000 for those who do not.

## **How You Can Help**

Please consider making a donation to this worthy cause, and help someone with a disability enjoy the benefits of co-op housing. Individuals can receive a tax receipt by making cheques payable to the Community Housing Land Trust Foundation and requesting that the funds be directed to the Disability Trust.

Ask your co-op or organization to consider making a one-time or annual donation to the Trust. Housing co-ops and organizations can make cheques payable directly to the Disability Trust.

Please mail your donation to:

Co-operative Housing Disability Trust  
200-5550 Fraser Street  
Vancouver BC V5W 2Z4

## **Want More Information?**

Contact Mary Boles at 604-879-5111 ext 141 (toll-free at 1-866-879-5111 ext 141) or email [mboles@chf.bc.ca](mailto:mboles@chf.bc.ca).