



# THE WAY OUT

MOTEL CONVERSION PROJECT

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Attachments: Strategic Plan, Zoning Letter, Appraisal, Items List, Contract to Purchase, Bank Commitment Letter, Budgets (No Capital contribution, With Capital Contribution, Budget Notes, 5 Year projections), Agency Financial.



Legal name: CASTLEGAR AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY SERVICES SOCIETY

Other name: CDCSS

Business address: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

E-mail: kristein.johnson@cdcsc.ca [REDACTED]

Mission and Values

Mission

We improve the quality of people’s lives by providing assistance, counselling and support, and by working for social change in our communities.

Values

We are committed to using these values as the foundation of our work.

We believe:

- in working for social change and a healthy environment – that preventing problems is as important as addressing them;
- that diversity brings richness to society - that all persons should be treated equally and without prejudice;
- that all people should live free from violence;
- that when facilitating change, working from strengths is more effective than simply working on problems; and
- that our clients can reach their potential as vital members of the community.

In achieving our work, we will:

- provide our services in a manner that is client centered, timely, well-coordinated and in a friendly atmosphere;
- respect each person’s inherent dignity and his or her right to confidentiality and informed consent;
- work towards accessibility, reducing barriers to service and organizing services to meet the needs of a culturally diverse community; and
- work closely with other individuals and groups to achieve success – through forming networks, coalitions, partnerships and collaborating on a regional basis.



## Purpose

Castlegar and District Community Services Society (CDCSS) is asking for your assistance in a capital contribution towards the purchase of 1660 Columbia Avenue in Castlegar. This will be the new home of The Way Out homeless shelter and long term housing. We are asking for \$200,000 towards the purchase. Currently CDCSS is looking at a mortgage of \$567,300, creating a mortgage payment monthly of about \$3750.00. We are hoping to decrease this amount to allow for increase in our services to tenants, provide lower rental costs and/or increase in rental subsidies, as well as create a savings account for future maintenance, replacements and renovations. CDCSS will also continue to work towards increasing our housing portfolio for the vulnerable populations.

In this business plan you will see the outline of our Agency as well as our proposed project.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE AGENCY

### Agency Overview

For the past 41 years CDCSS has been providing service to the area. CDCSS opened its doors in 1979 as a volunteer exchange program for seniors, was incorporated in 1983 as a non-profit, charitable society (#10687 8804 /RR0001), and has since become a lead agency for our community and

surrounding district. This has been accomplished through a network of partnerships with other agencies, community, Government, funders, members, volunteers, and our staff. Our highly qualified team provides daily support, offering services that are tailored to meet each person's specific need, to help provide a better quality of life.

<http://www.castlegarnews.com/news/26221591.html>

Castlegar has a spot on a list of the top 100 neighbourhoods set to lead growth in Canada, according to a September 26 RE/MAX Network and Verico Financial Group report.



Through this 41 year history, the one fact that remains unchanged is that a life full of trauma and dysfunction is detrimental to people. Over the years, our locations have provided facilities that are friendly and safe, with a highly qualified team to create consistency in the clients' lives.

Today, we are proud to say we operate over 26 programs and projects and provide services out of 4 locations. The agency is governed by a Board of Directors, with a full-time Executive Director responsible for the day-to-day operations, an Executive Assistant and a Financial Controller.

The agency is housed in a 4,000 square foot building (on two floors) in downtown Castlegar. The society had begun by leasing this building for 20 years, and then purchasing it in December 2005. There are 12 furnished offices (phones and computers all fully networked), one large administration area, one large and one small meeting room, and one staff room. Currently the upstairs is being used to house our homeless shelter until we take possession of the motel. These apartments are located on the second floor, and are used for our women's centre and youth Centre. (Currently closed due to COVID-19). All office space is fully occupied by 7 full-time and 7 part-time staff, as well as 16 seasonal shelter staff, and 5 seasonal social enterprise staff. In February 2007 the staff of CDCSS became a certified bargaining unit with BCGEU. The four management staff are excluded employees.

Outside of the main office, CDCSS also has an off-site office at the RCMP detachment, which houses the Victim Services Unit; a 3 bedroom townhouse which operates as one of our Domestic Violence Safe Home; and a one acre property with six – 2 bedroom affordable housing units that are used for women, children and disability (one unit is used as a 2<sup>nd</sup> safe home).

Relevant to this business plan, the agency has an accepted offer, and has met the conditions to purchase a local motel that will provide long term housing to individuals who are struggling with chronic homelessness, as well as a homeless shelter service.

As part of our strategic plan ([attached](#)) we are looking into other options to provide opportunities for more individuals within the surrounding area. By providing low-rental housing for individuals looking to re-establish their lives, it provides far greater odds for living healthy and happy lives, while moving forward into greater independence and the ability to handle difficult situations.

Currently in our area, CDCSS is the only agency offering services to the homeless. The local Foodbank will offer a hotel room to homeless, however this is completely reliant on donations to support the costs of a hotel room. Housing for chronic homelessness does not exist, and with the subsidized housing in the area, this can be difficult to impossible for a single individual. The local subsidized housing consists of 84 Units, 10 of these are for seniors. Families take precedent on the remaining 74. CDCSS has been working hard to find alternatives for those who are struggling with housing, and considered "hard to house". Castlegar has a significant housing crisis, and on any given day there will be 0-1 rental available, often a room in a house, and always above an affordable rate. While writing this plan, a search was done, showing no units. As our demographic associated to the motel project are struggling with complex needs (addictions, mental health, trauma), our agency cannot comfortably support assisting in housing



them in community members homes. Our clients deserve a home, need a home, however we also know intense services need to be a part of their success in maintaining housing successfully.

CDCSS has made a significant impact on housing, and continues to do so. We have been pre-approved for a housing unit with BC Housing to build and provide up to 25 apartment units for vulnerable women in our area. This project has purchased land, and will take possession in April, with the goal of beginning the build in the spring/summer of 2021. We now are working toward the same opportunities for our vulnerable homeless individuals.

The stay at the affordable housing project can vary depending on the success of the tenant. With the goal of having their own safe place to call home and a connection to the agency, there is something to strive for. The stay would ideally be up to one year; however it will vary based on success and goals, and the ability of the client. Some clients may call this home for many years. With CDCSS offering over 26 programs and services in the agency that will be readily available to all tenants, there will be better success at the continuation of wrap around services that are necessary to see individuals stabilize, assess needs and be linked to specific programs and services that are needed. Individuals are unique, and what brought them to us is also unique.

Castlegar and District Community Services Society



*Kristein Johnson*

#### Programs and other projects

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- 1) **Police Based Victim Services (PBVS)** (*Funded through the Ministry of Justice*)
- 2) **Castlegar and District Women's Center (Chrissy's Place)**(Funded through BC Gaming, Ministry of Justice, Donations)
- 3) **Women's Outreach and Support (OR)** (*Funded through Ministry of Justice*)



- 4) **Labor Market Research Programs.** (*Spark, MSDI*)
- 5) **Stopping the Violence Counselling (STV)** (*Funded through the Ministry of Justice*)
- 6) **Better at Home Seniors Program** (*Funded through the United Way of the Lower Mainland*)
- 7) **Safe Kids and Youth** (*Funded through the Kootenay Boundary Cooperative Community*)
- 8) **Family Support Counselling** (*funded through the Ministry of Child and Family Development*)
- 9) **PEACE** (*Funded through the Ministry of Justice*)
- 10) **Supervised Visitation and Family Support Worker**(*Ministry of Child and Family Development*)
- 11) **Sexual Abuse Intervention Counselling for Children (SAIP)** (*Funded through the Ministry of Justice*)
- 12) **Castlegar and District Youth Program** (*Funded through CBT and Vancouver Foundation*).
- 13) **2-Safe Homes for Domestic Violence** (*funded through BC Transitional Housing*).
- 14) **West Kootenay Volunteer Driver** (*funded through Interior Health and donations*)
- 15) **Michael Hinde bursary program** (funded through donations)
- 16) **Volunteer Income Tax Program** (partnership with CRA, and funded through donations)
- 17) **Loans for Women program** (Internally funded- original start up with Canadian Women's Foundation)
- 18) **Affordable Housing** (6 – two bedroom units) – Agency funded
- 19) **Homeless Partnering Strategy-** (Funded through BC Housing)
- 20) **Volunteer Assisted Transportation** (BC Gaming)
- 21) **Blueberry Affordable Housing Project** (owned and operated by CDCSS, funded through generated rent)
- 22) **Millennium Park Concession Social Enterprise** (*Maintained through annual profit*)
- 23) **Chrissy's Place – Women's Centre** (funded through BC Community Gaming and volunteer run)
- 24) **The Way Out Winter Shelter Services** (Funded through BC Housing)
- 25) **The Way Out skills program for Vulnerable** (Funded through Canadian Women's Foundation)
- 26) **D.O.P.E Outreach Team (Drug Overdose Prevention Education)** – (funded through Pagneta – ongoing funding pending)

**MOST RECENTLY, WE HAVE AN ACCEPTED OFFER (CONDITIONS MET) TO PURCHASE A LOCAL MOTEL TO PROVIDE SHELTER AND HOUSING SERVICES, AND NEW BUILD FOR VULNERABLE WOMEN**

**Outside services that provide services onsite** – Advocacy, Option's Sexual Health, Income support services, Circle of Indigenous Society(when requested), Budgeting on low income workshops, free haircut services.

**Throughout the year, many projects will also be facilitated, such as:**

**Victim Awareness:** Clothesline Project, Taking Back the Night Walk, VAWIR, and Coldest Night of the Year.

**Healthy Relationship Groups:** Participants will be able to identify characteristics of healthy relationships. Also included with this series is a drum making workshop facilitated by Elders in our community.



## The Project

### Description and Location of the property

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Castlegar and District Community Services Society is working through our purchase of this beautiful motel at 1660 Columbia Avenue, Castlegar BC V1N 1H9. This property is .45 acres, and located in the downtown heart of Castlegar. There are 6 self-contained units and a 2 bedroom house with a large office. 4 units are 1 bedrooms, 1 bath and 2 units are studio. This property also has out buildings, a pond, gazebo, and a large garage. This property is currently zoned for multifamily purposes. **We will not have to rezone. (City letter attached)**

CDCSS has an accepted offer of \$515,000, with a transfer date in January (due to owner being in China and COVID causing issues of return). All conditions have been met, and we are awaiting signatures. CDCSS is continuing to look for supports with capital funding, to help with the costs of purchase. We are looking to reduce our costs to help provide lower rents, subsidies, and assistance to our future tenants.

### Appraisal

The appraisal was complete October, and shows a value of \$505,000.00 as is right now, and an estimated value of \$605,000 with our vision as a long term rental property. **(attached)**

### Staffing needs

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#### Our vision

Site Manager: 2 days per week = \$22,000

Outreach staff: 2 days per week = \$18,200

Supervision: 1 day per week = \$16,380

Accounting: 1 day per week = \$16,000

Total = \$72,580

CDCSS has reached out to BC Housing for assistance with some funding for operational. This is not confirmed.

CDCSS will also work to secure funding from other sources to support the programming needs. We will see reduced needs for outreach services during the Winter Shelter season, as all tenants will have access to case management.



PROPERTY PICTURES





## Our Plan

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CDCSS will rename this project to “The Way Out” (TWO). This name filters through to all of the agency homeless services, helping to maintain consistency in the community.

CDCSS will be working with this property to provide housing and shelter services to the most vulnerable and hard to house in our community. With a homeless population that is continuously rising, we are finding that we are struggling to find affordable and supportive housing to these individuals. Since the onset of the pandemic, we are seeing significant rises in our homeless population. With successful COVID-19 funding, we have spent over \$100,000 in the past 7 months. This has supported increased hours in our homeless outreach, over 45,000 in shelter costs (motels), food, and other basic needs, as well as supporting our staff with the ability to stay in contact with our clients remotely.

We are confident in the venture, as we can show our success in our similar project. In 2015 in CDCSS purchased a property with 6 units in Blueberry for affordable housing for vulnerable women who have experienced violence, and persons with disabilities. This housing project continues to show success financially, as well as our maintenance and upkeep. We have been successful in over \$80,000 in grants and funding for renovations and energy efficiencies, as well as donations of new appliances, furniture and other essential items. Most of all, we have seen success in the tenants we serve.

## Tenant selection

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Our housing projects have a team of 7 people (from agency, business sector, Indigenous and community) who will sit on the advisory committee, meeting quarterly (COVID has limited this). This team assists CDCSS with all affordable housing, and future housing (Motel, as well as our approved apartment to be built for women). Our team meets to ensure the vision remains focused on our demographic served, discusses the state of the property and its needs, discussions on the needs we see with tenants, successes, and providing guidance as situations may arise. This group also conducts an annual review through an onsite walkthrough of the property yearly.

CDCSS Housing tenancy committee consists of 4 people (Board of Directors, Executive Director and CDCSS staff), this team reviews, interviews and selects tenants for available spaces according to policy and procedure, and targeted demographic.

With the new project, there will be no displacement of tenants. This property is currently a motel, and therefore it will be empty when CDCSS takes possession.

CDCSS follows a process when selecting tenants:

Possible tenants will fill out an application form. The application will have information on previous housing, shelter stays, other service providers, income sources, references (if available), and other data we feel necessary.

All applications are given either to the clients outreach worker or the Executive Director. The Executive Director will review applications and connect with clients if more information is needed. Tenants living in shelter will be given priority, and while in shelter will work with case managers to determine needs and goals for success in independent living situations.

Applications are reviewed by the Tenant committee, this committee will review applications and make decisions on if the applicant is eligible for housing.

Eligible applicants will be scheduled for interviews with the tenant committee.

### About the Housing Programs

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CDCSS affordable housing benefits include:

- Safe and secure location close to bus stops
- Ongoing support and outreach
- Fully furnished units (when needed)
- Low rent
- Long term stay
- Laundry
- Onsite gardening (greenhouse and gardens) Opportunity to learn from members of the garden club.

Onsite workshops and groups (skill building groups, budgeting, nutrition,) CDCSS has AA/NA groups in the homeless sector housing and shelter

Residents in homeless shelter and housing will be able to have meal service during winter month (join in on meals with the Winter Shelter program)

Ongoing supports with basic needs when necessary (food, pharmacy, bus tickets)

Access to clothing

Access to ongoing rental supplements

The goal in providing TWO housing is to assist our clients in creating a sense of stability, and helping them to move forward in their lives.

In addition to the core services we can also provide:

- Continued access to support through Homeless program coordinator, as well as all other internal programs that may apply.
- Ongoing social events and activities.
- Referrals to community professional support agencies and individuals.

CDCSS has created policies and procedures, rules and guidelines, and a detailed lease, which ensure that all tenants can create a home, and live in peace while feeling safe and secure. For some tenants, the project will be a transition to a more independent life.

### About the Shelter

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As we continue to work through our purchase of the motel, we have started our shelter in our "Plan B" as a starting point. Our shelter services are located in the upper apartments of our office building at 1007 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. (we have



relocated our second safe home permanently to another location, and our Women's Centre and Youth Centre are meeting remotely due to COVID-19). We anticipate the timeline of this location to last until mid to end of January, where we will then relocate to 1660 Columbia.

CDCSS will provide 8-10 beds, with an additional 4 cots for overflow, once we have proper fire systems in place. Overflow will happen in our 2<sup>nd</sup> apartment upstairs, and will be set as an easy transition to continue to allow for daytime programming in this space. The bed capacity may have the ability to increase at the motel, however at this time we are looking at the same numbers. With the COVID-19, we may find that we encounter adjustments due to availability and appropriateness of social distancing. While at 1007 2<sup>nd</sup> street, any homeless that are required to isolate due to COVID will be safely taken to a motel room, and CDCSS will commit to ensuring these clients are provided with basic needs. At the new location, during the pandemic, one of the smaller rooms may be designated for COVID isolation.

At our current location, neighbors are aware, and we have informed them of our 24/7 staffing, along with our security measures (ie: we have surveillance cameras at all our locations). We feel prepared to answer any and all questions without hesitation.

Prior to our move to the motel, we will ensure that additional items for COVID-19 are in place, along with the security system. As the motel will require some renovations and repairs, the shelter portion would be scheduled for after March 31<sup>st</sup> to ensure we can provide shelter. This property is able to house immediately.

Prior to moving to the new location, CDCSS Executive Director and Board Chair will set up meetings with the neighbors around the property. This will consist of 2 car dealerships. We will ensure that these businesses are aware of our procedures, policies and security measures. The new location will have property cameras, and will ensure these cameras monitor the car lots that neighbor the property. We will instill rules with tenants and shelter residents to correspond with safety and security for neighbors. BC Housing will assist with conversations with neighbors if necessary.

CDCSS anticipates the rapid growth in homeless will not subside, and that our shelter will fill up nightly. Our staff are hired and trained to ensure the safety of clients, staff, volunteers, and the community. During shelter months, all individuals including shelter and housing will have the ability to access the great food provided by our in-house chef, along with bagged lunch program for those choosing not to stay in shelter. CDCSS has applied for year round shelter services with BC Housing, and are awaiting response.

## Location

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Location



**Location:** 1660 Columbia Dr, Castlegar BC  
**Ammenities:**  
 No Frills – 6 min. walk  
 Safeway – 3 min walk  
 Bus stop – 3 min walk  
 Castlegar Rec Centre – 15 min bus  
 Shoppers pharmacy – 15 min walk (methadone program)  
 Tim Hortons – 5 min walk  
 Our office – 15 min bus  
 Library – 15 min bus



The motel is located at 1660 Columbia Avenue. Columbia Avenue is the main thoroughfare through the community, and this location is in the middle of Castlegar. Around this location are all the necessities a person may need. It is within walking distance of 2 grocery stores, bus stops, pharmacies, and 1km away from the local recreation centre, and minutes away from parks, beaches and water activities. Castlegar overlooks the Columbia River in the heart of the West Kootenays, surrounded by water, trees and nature. It provides access to outdoor recreation as soon as you step out of your house. This property has a park like setting, and with some landscaping, hard work, it provides an environment of peace and serenity, gardening, socializing, and outdoor onsite activities. The opportunities are endless for our residents to engage in gardening, and other outdoor living. The property is full of pears, apples, plums, cherries and other fruit. The land's cultural roots are traditional Aboriginal hunting grounds and Doukhobor settlements, adding a unique cultural diversity.

### Size and Capacity

Rental units will consist of 4 – one bedroom units, and 2 studio apartments. All units will be self contained with kitchens, and/or kitchenettes, bathrooms, showers, and fully furnished. As our target demographic will most often be carrying all their belongings, we will need to support all furnishings.

The “house” on the property has 2 bedrooms, and a large office (easily converting to a bedroom). During the winter, the house will provide shelter to up to 12 individuals (COVID safe), the “office” will be converted to support a safe space for women and transgender if full time shelter is not an option. If we are successful with full time shelter funding, we will convert one of the units to support women (we will add a doorway into the unit from the house). During the off shelter season, this space will provide a “boarding house” type service for those who may be in transisiton. This will include individuals who are mainstream housing ready, and needing a few months of support, possibly awaiting an upcoming unit to move into, or individuals who may be trying to relocate closer to family or another community.

The motel units are move in ready after CDCSS has taken possession, even prior to adding kitchenettes, as our agency will be mid shelter season. Those staying in the rooms without kitchenettes (currently 4), will have access to our onsite chef in the Winter Shelter. Commitment to kitchens will be prioritized for completion by April 1, 2021. In the event that this is delayed, residents will have access to house kitchen.

### Impacts

Castlegar is nestled in the Kootenays, and like many of the communities within the Kootenays, it too has an increasing population of homeless. As point in time counts are not always accurate, we anticipate that our community currently is seeing close to 25 actively homeless individuals, with many more that are couch surfing and living in cars or inappropriate shelters. Our current shelter is housing 10 nightly (restricted due to covid-19), and sees other daily to provide food and supplies.

Our new project will show many positive impacts for our community. As we will be in a position to provide shelter services along with opportunity for long term housing, we have the unique opportunity to potentially assist up to 75% of this population with housing needs. Taking into consideration that there is a certain number of people who choose to live outside, we stand to make a huge impact with homelessness in our community. CDCSS will continue to provide ongoing services for harm reduction, basic needs, as well as food and outdoor supplies.

With the support of case management, overdose prevention and harm reduction, we are also in the position of assisting with safety and positive change for the demographic we aim to serve.

Studies also show that when a community is in the position to provide supportive housing, and homeless services the community will:

- Have reduced costs in healthcare
- Individuals will be in the position to regain control of their lives (employment, recovery, education, health)
- Individuals are happier, more likely to have positive interactions with neighbors, community , police
- Higher numbers of individuals struggling with addiction seek recovery faster
- In supportive housing, individuals begin to engage in and with peer support, AA/NA

Our program is a step towards ending homelessness in our community. We feel that withing 5 years, we will have supported up to 15 individuals to regain control, and either moved to, or working towards mainstream housing, employment or education, and community connection.

### Advantages or Disadvantages

Location is on major road , which is a busy street. It is however landscaped to provide privacy and damper noise levels. Behind the building is the CPR train tracks. Train is however scheduled and does not pass through in middle



of the night. The bus stop is close, however transportation in Castlegar is limited and busses stop running by early evening. Residents are able to access all necessities and recreational activities by foot.

The housing project gives priority to people re-establishing their lives. Supports for tenants are available, and with certain tenants, additional supports will be a condition of rent. All tenants are interviewed by a committee consisting of 2 board members, a staff (to support clients), and the Executive Director.

Providing direction to the project, CDCSS meets with the Affordable Housing Committee. This committee includes a Board member, the Executive Director, a staff member, our Indigenous Elder, a realtor, and a mortgage banker. Property is maintained locally, and all maintenance is conducted based on procedures set by the agency.

Tenants pay between \$650 – 850.00 depending on unit, and agency is responsible for utilities. Rates are set based on housing allowance amounts through Ministry of Social Development and Innovation. Tenants will be eligible for up to \$300 in long term rental subsidies.

### Ownership Details

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There will be a mortgage on this property, and the property will be owned by Castlegar and District Community Services Society.

### Equipment, Furniture & Fixtures

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Each unit is provided with a fridge and stove in working order.

Units will be heated with Natural Gas

There is a communal laundry

During shelter season, evening laundry services may be made available to tenants. (as our night staff runs laundry during the middle of the night)

CDCSS purchase of property includes all furniture, misc items, bedding, tv's etc (list attached from owner)

### Other

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CDCSS will work with both Shaw services and Telus to try and negotiate a group rate for tenants on both internet and television. Costs would be reduced for tenants.

Property is fully accessible for all internet and television services

CDCSS will establish an outside communal BBQ area, and host community BBQ's for all residents. This will be done to create a safe, healthy and positive community aspect. CDCSS will host tenant meetings to ensure neighborly relationships are established. This will be done through meals, bbqs and other activities that are positive.

### Policies and Procedures

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CDCSS Affordable Housing Project recognizes that under the Canadian Human Rights Act, it is against the law to discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, national or ethnic origin, religion, marital status, family status, disability, sexual orientation, sex, pregnancy, child birth and a pardoned criminal conviction. As such, CDCSS ensures that our housing services be accessible to all individuals that are within the targeted demographic for this project, and that the agency will not practice or engage in unlawful discrimination on the basis of the culture, spiritual beliefs, gender identity, social condition, physical ability and any prohibited ground of discrimination covered by the Canadian Human



Rights Act as listed above. CDCSS will provide services that are sensitive and responsive to the diverse needs of the individuals it serves and promote cross-cultural understanding and respect for diversity among tenants.

Other policies are available and new policy will be created specific to housing to protect tenants, the agency, and staff. Policies and procedures have been developed already for TWO Winter Shelter. Procedures are created for the project, and continue to grow as need arises.

### Harm Reduction

CDCSS is a harm reduction site, this means ;

Harm reduction aims to keep people safe and minimize death, disease, and injury from high risk behaviour. The evidence shows it works and has many benefits for people who use substances, their families, and our communities. Harm reduction involves a range of support services and strategies to empower and support people to be safer and healthier. Some examples include:

- [Supply distribution](#) and recovery programs such as for needles
- Assistance in access to methadone
- [Take Home Naloxone program](#)
- Outreach and education services to encourage safer behavior, and provide harm reduction supplies.
- Peer support programs that improve their quality of life and gaps in services
- Education and informational campaigns.

#### Harm Reduction Works

Research shows harm reduction activities do not encourage substance use. In fact, they are more likely than other methods to encourage people who use substances to start treatment.

Harm Reduction activities can:

- Reduce hepatitis and HIV
- Reduce overdoses and death

- Educate about safer sex and sexual health and increase condom use
- Reduce injection substance use and used needles in public places
- Increase referrals to treatment programs and services
- Increase employment and reduce crime
- Reduce sharing needles and other equipment
- Educate about safer consumption and reduce use

**NOTE: HARM REDUCTION** <https://harmreduction.org/about-us/principles-of-harm-reduction/>

❖ **PRINCIPLES OF HARM REDUCTION**

❖ *Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs.*

❖ **FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES CENTRAL TO HARM REDUCTION**

❖ *Harm reduction incorporates a spectrum of strategies that includes safer use, managed use, abstinence, meeting people who use drugs “where they’re at,” and addressing conditions of use along with the use itself. Because harm reduction demands that interventions and policies designed to serve people who use drugs reflect specific individual and community needs, there is no universal definition of or formula for implementing harm reduction.*



### Partners/Referrals

CDCSS has been working with a realtor in our community, as well as the Kootenay Savings and Credit Union throughout this purchase. We have also worked with the city of Castlegar to ensure the zoning is correct, building inspector, fire chief, and the City of Castlegar council. Other partners include:

#### Circle of Indigenous Nations Society

- Provides cultural support to clients
- Works with CDCSS on the Housing Advisory Committee (society Elder)
- Provides ongoing education and support to staff regarding the needs and supports given to Indigenous clients
- Provides onsite workshops, healing circles, and other cultural activities when requested or needed.
- Will provide the opening and blessing of both spaces
- Ongoing connection with the Aboriginal Health Coordinator

#### Mental Health and Addictions

- Assisting with Mental Health assessment when clients are willing to attend
- Referrals for clients to access club house, counselling and treatment services
- Access to all services
- Access to information and educational support for staff
- Onsite Addictions outreach and support services
- Working with our D.O.P.E team on harm reduction and ongoing training needs

#### Anchors

- Accessing Anchors for ongoing supports, information and training for staff
- Referral source for clients accessing shelter and housing

#### Interior Health

- Access to Options Sexual Health
- Supports with the ongoing Pandemic
- Assisting clients with their health
- Ongoing training and connections for staff to provide appropriate services

#### Freedom Quest

- Support, education, and referrals for all clients that up to 19 in need of mental health and substance use.

#### Stepping Stones Homeless Shelter Nelson

- Access to ongoing resources and supports to ensure success
- Back and forth referrals for shelter services

#### Castlegar RCMP

- Providing urgent support when needed. (CDCSS runs the Victim Services Program, this would be part of CDCSS ongoing supports)
- Quick response support
- Providing any education or information that may arise, and be helpful to the ongoing support of the program.

#### Community Harvest Food Bank

- Referrals for Shelter
- Working with the coordinator to access her support and expertise with the Homeless population
- Access to supplies that may be needed

#### BC Housing

- Financial obligation to support program staffing and other needs
- Support with ongoing training and supplies when requested
- Support with communications, harm reduction, statistical reporting



- Supports with rental supplements
- BC Non Profit Housing Association (Member)
- Education, support
- BCSTH (Member)
- Education and support
- Toward the Heart
- Harm Reduction and overdose response education, training and supplies (CDCSS is a designated harm reduction site), this means that we ensure supplies for safety, as well as providing the education and support needed. This includes training for staff.
- Homeless Hub- access to forms, training, policy, procedure

### Major Players

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**BC Housing-** provides substantial funding for Winter Shelter, currently fund P/T Homeless outreach services, access to policies and procedures, and further information as requested on affordable housing.

**Provincial Governments –**are responsible for funding a number of programs and services offered in office. All services are available and offered to tenants of the affordable housing project.

**Municipal Government –**funds partial services to Victims, as well as providing tax and utility services to affordable housing project. Support with building permits, zoning.

**Private and Non-Profit -** play a role in the direction, and development process. This includes members of the community, business and social sector sitting on a housing advisory committee.

**Mortgage brokers and bank –**provide affordable mortgage rates, and lending. Also provide accounts at non-profit rates, and at times, fundraising. We work with the Kootenay Savings Credit Union in Castlegar.

**Partner agencies –** provide referral sources for tenants in need.

**BC Residential Tenancy Act-** Provide laws, regulations and advice.

**Stakeholders including business and grant funders –** will provide assistance in funding, renovations, assistance in tenant costs, supplies.

**Additional Stakeholders-** will be added as the agency grows with affordable housing. CDCSS has been working to ensure current project will be sustainable, and following through with the mission, goals and objectives of the project. With our years of experience, we are confident in ability with management, operations, financial and support service to continue supporting our community with increasing housing to fill the needs. Currently the need in the area is high, and is anticipated to increase.

### Principles

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- People-Centered: Housing programs, services and supports should be based on a “people first” approach that focuses on positive results for individuals and families.



- Partnership-Based: Housing in Castlegar and District requires strong partnerships among all levels of Government, non-profit and BC housing providers, and the people who require housing support to build healthy, sustainable and inclusive neighborhoods.
- Locally Driven: Affordable housing must be locally relevant and provided in a supportive environment that includes access to jobs, community resources and services.
- Supportive: Will help those who are in need of housing move into permanent, affordable homes with appropriate support services.
- Inclusive: All persons have the right to equal treatment and protection from discriminatory practices that limit their housing opportunities.
- Fiscally Responsible: The strategy will reflect fiscal circumstances as they evolve, to promote a diverse housing marketplace that helps community members' access affordable housing.

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION

### Community Information

Castlegar was able to complete a needs assessment on the housing within the area. This study was able to identify many concerns for community members. As seen in the excerpts provided, it continues to be a concern.

*Castlegar and Area Housing Need and Demand Study Prepared for New Vision Housing Society by M. Thomson Consulting Authors: Traci Goertzen and Matt Thomson*

Available at:

<http://selkirk.ca/sites/default/files/RIC/Selkirk-College-Castlegar-Needs-Assessment-2013.pdf>

*“Castlegar and Area Housing Need and Demand Study  
Executive Summary (pg. 4)*

*Homelessness represents another significant challenge for Castlegar and Area.*

*There is no women's transition house in Castlegar, the safe homes have closed and Castlegar's Temporary Emergency Shelter is limited to 3 beds (and 2 couches for overflow). Many people at risk of homelessness have to leave the area to seek shelter. While it is difficult to enumerate homeless individuals without a significant investment of resources, stakeholders have nonetheless identified homelessness and risk of homelessness as key issues. Street homelessness is not very visible in Castlegar, but key informants noted that there is a subsection of individuals who experience homelessness, risk of homelessness or significant volatility in their housing situation on a regular basis. Many of these individuals may have mental health or substance use issues.*

*Section 2 Quantitative Research Findings*

*2.7 Social Housing Supply (pg.54)*

*BC Housing currently subsidizes 210 households, as illustrated in Table 1.36.*

*There are 76 low income housing units for families,*

*55 units for independent seniors, 15 units for frail seniors and 10 units for those with special needs.*

*Also included is a unit for a safe house to shelter women and children fleeing abuse. Rental subsidies,*

*BC Housing provides support 31 seniors through the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program, and; 22 families through the Rental Assistance Program (RAP).*

*Section 5 Emerging Needs*

*5.2 Long Term Emergency Accommodations and Services (pg 84)*

*Additional housing supports that stakeholders and clients identified as key priorities included:*

- *Women's transition house*
- *Permanent shelter*
- *Youth safe house*
- *Second stage women's housing*

*A local women's transition and permanent shelter represent significant needs in the community; however, identifying appropriate agencies and accessing limited resources mean that they are more likely to be long-term priorities that will take several years to achieve."*

*(Castlegar and Area Housing Need and Demand Study Prepared for New Vision Housing Society by M. Thomson Consulting Authors: Traci Goertzen and Matt Thomson*

**According to the most recent report from our region:**

#### **Homelessness**

**BC Housing, in association with the Homelessness Services Association of BC (HSABC), Urban Matters, and the BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA), produced the 2018 Report on Homeless Counts in B.C., which integrates Point-in-Time (PiT) counts of homeless people in select communities across the Province. The following is a summary of key data provided by the report regarding those surveyed in the City of Nelson (the only RDCK geography with data available):**

- 115 people were without safe, permanent housing
- 72% of people without safe permanent housing were unsheltered (83 individuals);
- 44% have called Nelson home for at least 10 years;
- 54% are male, 39% are female, and 7% identify as having a different gender identity;
- 18% are "youth" or people younger than 25 years old; and
- 35% identify as Indigenous.

**Aggregated provincial results provide greater detail on the homeless population, including:**

- 4% are immigrants or refugees;
- 8% identify as LGBTQ2S;
- addiction or substance abuse is the most common reason (23%) for a loss of housing, followed by eviction (18%), and finances (18%); and
- 51% of people reported their income as the primary barrier to accessing housing.

**There is a need for more non-market housing options, supportive, and emergency housing options.**

**As of January 2020, the BC Housing wait list for the 143 subsidised unit stock in the RDCK had 123 applications, including: 27 families, 25 residents with disabilities, and 30 seniors. As of 2018, 101 people were identified as experiencing homelessness, 72 percent of whom were unsheltered. Thirty-five percent identified as being Indigenous; comparatively, 6 percent of the total population identifies as Indigenous. Of all respondents to the 2018 Point-In-Time (PiT) count, 18 percent were youth below the age of 26.**

**This is likely an underrepresentation of the actual need as those who are in "hidden homeless" situations (couch surfing, living in campers, boats and other vehicles) are often hard to identify. Community engagement activities highlighted this need. Many key informants made it clear that people with the least ability to weather unstable housing conditions are the most likely to be affected by the current housing deficit. Those in equity-seeking groups, and especially those of Indigenous identity were at a higher risk of housing instability. Informants overwhelmingly pointed to deficits in emergency shelters, transition housing, supportive housing and senior's housing, noting that while these options were limited for all residents, the options for residents that were not classified as seniors were even more limited. Several key informants highlighted the need for supportive housing for youth and young adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).**

**One of the identified challenges in providing non-market, affordable housing in the RDCK is the perception in communities that low income housing will not be well maintained, stigma around affordable housing projects, and rental horror stories. Interviewees working in housing or social services noted that a recognition that poverty can happen to anyone is crucial.**

**"[there is a] stigma around affordable housing and [it is] hard to make money renting."**

**"The thought as well in the community is that if you build housing for low/ affordable it will be trashed. The community is not educated or aware of how these projects run or the supports within them."**



## STATISTICS

### Local statistics

## AND FACTS

### Available emergency housing

Services	Area			
	Castlegar	Trail	Nelson	Grand Forks
Emergency Shelter	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transition Housing	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Safe Home	Yes	No	No	No
Second Stage Housing	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

In Castlegar, there are currently 143 affordable housing units. These units are available to families, seniors, persons with disabilities, individuals, and youth.

Housing Type	# of units
Single/ Couple	0
Families	82
Seniors	41
Disabilities	17
Youth	3 (program based)

According to Stats Canada, in Castlegar, 16.9% of the community is living below the level of poverty (\$25,400.) [https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/map-carte/thematic\\_download/thematiques\\_telecharger\\_R3-eng.cfm?SERIES=10&GEOCODE=500](https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/map-carte/thematic_download/thematiques_telecharger_R3-eng.cfm?SERIES=10&GEOCODE=500)

Based on the city population of 8050, and an additional approximate district population of 8-9000 additional this is a total 16-17,000 people served by CDCSS, we are dealing with about 2800 individuals, families, seniors and youth living in poverty. Looking at this; it is obvious our community is in desperate need of more affordable housing. Currently the government is assisting only 6% of BC through assisted housing. This includes: homeless, assisted living, independent social housing, and rental assistance(primarily seniors).

*Despite the presence of affordable rental opportunities, there are still many households experiencing affordability issues. An important indicator of housing affordability is households spending on housing costs (shelter and associated utilities) to a maximum of 30% of the household income.*

*As of 2006, 18.1% of all households (945 with rent or mortgage) pay 30% or more on housing, while 35.3% of all renters (330 households) pay 30% or more. Rental rates have gone up since 2006 and according to stakeholder interviews are causing a strain on families and individuals. Coinciding increases in costs for food and commodities, and a lack of a living wage as a minimum wage, pose challenges for people not in a two-income household or making a single highpaying salary to afford suitable and appropriate housing. Even the low-end rental rates are not affordable for vulnerable individuals. Income Assistance shelter allowances and other housing subsidies for individuals and families have not kept pace with increases in rental costs. Additionally, no purpose built rental facilities are currently being planned.*

<http://selkirk.ca/sites/default/files/RIC/Selkirk-College-Castlegar-Needs-Assessment-2013.pdf>



**HOUSING OPTIONS**



**BUYING A HOME**

AVERAGE COST TO BUY A HOME – \$ 320,000(requiring 5% down first home owner.) Unattainable for someone on low income  
 (http://www.canadianrealestatemagazine.ca/top-neighbourhoods/castlegar-bc-25683.aspx)

Down Payment-	\$16,000
Estimated Mortgage-	\$ 1,800 per month
Insurance-	\$ 200 per month
Utilities -	\$ 200 per month
Property Tax	\$ 200 per month
	\$ 2400 per month

Income needed to stay within 30% - approximately \$6800 per month, or \$81,600 per year after tax.

**RENTING A HOME**



AVERAGE RENTAL COSTS room - \$800, 1 bed - \$1100, (2 bedroom)- \$1700.00 (requiring ½ for damage deposit, utilities usually not included)

Income necessary to stay within 30% - approximately \$5000 per month, or \$60,000 per year after tax.

Rental is an issue in the area, vacancy rates are at 1.6% in the area, (2010), compared to 19.5 per cent in Revelstoke, 11.8 per cent in Rossland, and 5.4 per cent in Cranbrook.

[http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64487/64487\\_2015\\_B01.pdf](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64487/64487_2015_B01.pdf)

One renter in the area spoke to CDCSS, and mentioned that with one rental (1 bedroom), he received over 30 inquiries within the first 3 days, and was able to rent at \$750.00 per month + utilities. He feels he could have asked for up to \$850.00 + utilities. income rates do not match rental rates in our community (See monthly income table below).



**SUBSIDIZED HOUSING**

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Subsidized housing is an option for all lower income individuals, families and seniors, however as seen in above stats, competition is exceptionally high, and waitlists are extreme.

Financial support for subsidized housing is generally administered based on “rent-geared-to-income”. Rent-geared-to-income is for low-to-moderate income households. Tenants pay rent based on the gross income of the household rather than paying the market rate. Affordable rent is defined as costing no more than 30% of a household’s total gross monthly income, subject to a minimum rent that tenants will be asked to pay based on the number of persons living in the home –

See more at: <http://www.bchousing.org/Initiatives/Providing/Subsidized#sthash.lk85m8Ga.dpuf>



**FAMILIES**

Families make up a high percentage of the area, and make up for a good portion of our workforce. Often this workforce is limited and income is in the lower bracket. Affordable rental options are limited, and housing prices have risen out of reach. Housing options for families must be close to work and schools. With the demographic of families taking up over 65% of the population. BC Housing provides 72 units to families.



**STUDENTS**

With several colleges within the region, students are a high population. With these shrinking rental options there is a concern for any student choosing to come to the area. Innovative solutions are needed, such as more “bedroom rentals” etc.



**SENIORS**

Seniors in our area are quickly becoming one of the highest growing populations, currently taking up just over 20%. Seniors require accessible and affordable housing to live healthy and fulfilled lives. Seniors often work within a much lower income, and are living in inefficient housing that is unmanageable to keep up, and come with high energy costs.



**ARTISIANS**

The Kootenays are filled with local artisans, who like to sell out of their residence, as well as at craft fairs and local markets. Housing prices and availability become a barrier. Artisans are seeking spaces where they can both live and work.



**COMPLEX NEEDS**

People struggling with complex needs are in need of approaches that will help to integrate and provide the supports to ensure healthy and safe lives. This includes homeless, addictions, mental health, and other complex issues. Supportive housing is needed. Currently there is little to no availability for this segment of our population. THIS IS THE DEMOGRAPHIC THAT WE WILL BE WORKING TO ASSIST.

*The asterisk indicates the most recent rate table changes*

Support Rate									Shelter Maximum
Unit Size	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>H</u>	
1	*\$385.00	*\$432.92	N/A	*\$681.42	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$375.00
2	*\$507.22	*\$652.06	*\$525.58	*\$900.56	*\$1,149.06	*\$822.08	*\$573.58	*\$596.22	\$570.00
3	*\$601.06	*\$746.06	*\$525.58	*\$994.56	*\$1,243.06	*\$822.08	*\$573.58	*\$690.06	\$660.00
4	*\$601.06	*\$746.06	*\$525.58	*\$994.56	*\$1,243.06	*\$822.08	*\$573.58	*\$690.06	\$700.00
5	*\$601.06	*\$746.06	*\$525.58	*\$994.56	*\$1,243.06	*\$822.08	*\$573.58	*\$690.06	\$750.00
6	*\$601.06	*\$746.06	*\$525.58	*\$994.56	*\$1,243.06	*\$822.08	*\$573.58	*\$690.06	\$785.00
7	*\$601.06	*\$746.06	*\$525.58	*\$994.56	*\$1,243.06	*\$822.08	*\$573.58	*\$690.06	\$820.00



<b>Key</b>	
<b>A</b>	Employable singles, couples, and two-parent families where all adults are under 65 years of age.
<b>B</b>	Singles, couples, and two-parent families where all adults meet the Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB) criteria and all are under 65.
<b>C</b>	Employable one-parent families where the parent is under 65.
<b>D</b>	Singles, couples, and two-parent families where one adult is aged 65 years or older.
<b>E</b>	Couples and two-parent families where both adults are aged 65 years or older.
<b>F</b>	One-parent families where the parent is aged 65 or older.
<b>G</b>	One-parent families where the parent meets the Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB) criteria and is under 65.
<b>H</b>	*Couples and two-parent families where one adult meets the PPMB criteria and all are under 65.

Now, how do people live in a home with that income?

**HOUSING PROVIDERS / STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

In Castlegar, there are other affordable housing providers, they include:

BC Housing  
 Strengths –  
 Guaranteed rent at 30% of income  
 Rental rate only increases if income increases  
 Units available to families, individuals, and seniors  
 84 Units available



Weaknesses	Financial resources readily available High competition for housing due to limited number of units No pets allowed at all Possible stigma Support services not provided through BC Housing
Private Housing	
Strengths	Ability to live in preferred location Less Government regulations Privacy More choice in housing type
Weaknesses	Little to no rent control Lack of knowledge on supports in community Statistically higher rent No policies or procedures regarding maintenance
Non-profit Housing provided through community agencies/societies	
Strengths	Focused on services following mission and vision statements Governed by a Board of Directors Fiscally responsible Often providing services, programs and support to tenants Goal to maintain affordable rates Community Support Access to grants and other external funding when available
Weaknesses	Limited financial resources Reliant on volunteers Unable to provide multiple units due to financial resources

### Legislations

*CDCSS commits to following affordable housing legislation, some of which include:  
(not all are applicable to CDCSS Affordable Housing project)*

National Housing Act

Society Act

Cooperative Association Act

Residential Tenancy Act

Building and Fire Codes

Employment Standards Act

Workers Compensation Act | Occupational Health and Safety Regulations

Personal Information Protection Act

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Human Rights Act

Tobacco Control Act

Criminal Records Review Act

- See more at:

[https://www.bchousing.org/Partners/H\\_S\\_Op/Administration/Legislation/Legislation#sthash.7TqfPyXm.dpuf](https://www.bchousing.org/Partners/H_S_Op/Administration/Legislation/Legislation#sthash.7TqfPyXm.dpuf)

## RISK AND RESPONSE

### Risk Factors

According to the Canadian 2006 Census, 10 per cent of all rental housing requires major repairs, and the average age of buildings that house the lowest income bracket is approximately 50 years.

Social housing is deteriorating due to a continuing lack of funding to support maintenance and modernization, as well as lengthy waiting lists for social housing. There is an urgent need for investment in both the private and social housing sector.

*"In the past two years housing prices in BC have increased by 30 percent. Driving these figures are a strong economy and an aging population from across the country. Historically, the private sector delivered all housing, including affordable. In areas of special need of supported social housing (seniors, low income, emergency and transition housing), the federal and provincial governments created agencies and programs to deliver social housing, and non-profit organizations managed construction and operation. As the federal government withdrew from funding social housing programs in the early 1990s, the provinces took on the responsibility for delivering social housing. Since 2001 the provincial government has less funding available under its housing programs, leaving local governments searching for creative solutions to providing both social and affordable housing. In the past decade B.C. communities have been caught relying on the private sector to continue to provide affordable housing in an international economy where land has become a secure investment that is now valued in many communities in an international land market. Housing, including affordable housing, is both a social and economic benefit, and an integral part of healthy communities. It is up to all levels of government to address this aspect of community health, just as governments provide parks, water supply and a livable urban environment. All levels of government are required to bridge the gap between what the development community provides as housing and what residents need in terms of type of housing and cost. Governments and housing organizations must now facilitate and deliver low end of market as well as non-market housing if most communities are to maintain an adequate housing stock. Each community in British Columbia is unique, and the approaches to meeting the challenge of affordable housing will be different in each of them". ([//www.housing.gov.bc.ca/housing/rentguide/guide](http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/housing/rentguide/guide))(<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca>)*

CDCSS has a long history of applying and being successful in renovation and repair funding. With our property in Blueberry we secured up to \$75,000 to assist in major repairs. We also have secured maintenance at a low rate, some volunteer work, and the ability to have skilled labor at a lower cost. We take the maintenance and comfort for our tenants seriously, and ensure safe and comfortable living at a low cost.

### Financial Risks

Agencies such as CDCSS are working very hard to fill these gaps within the communities. The need is evident through the people served. With all the programs offered, a common theme is a need for affordable housing, and appropriate housing with access to community services and business. With CDCSS taking on this gap in service, there is pressure put on the agency to ensure the property is kept up with maintenance and upgrades, as well as mortgage, insurance, and property tax expense. This becomes difficult when insuring tenants are provided affordable rental options, limiting the financial resources.

Vacancy is a realistic concern, although there has been success in filling all 6 units in our housing project, even short term vacancies create concern in financial revenue. Ensuring units are occupied at all times is essential.

Maintaining a savings is also essential; this ensures the ability to replace or repair units, appliances, hot water tanks, furnaces etc. CDCSS maintains a savings account, however currently these reserves are only able to cover repairs



or replacements on minimal expenses as seen in our financial projections. We reach out and apply for all funding to assist in capital repairs and maintenance.

As such, to continue providing housing to our most vulnerable, CDCSS is reaching out for funding to support this growing concern.

### Planned Response

#### Planned Response

CDCSS continues to create goals and visions as the current affordable housing project grows.

These visions include:

- Continuing to provide continued and additional services through funders, grants, donations, and other stakeholders.
- The goal is to have the property as a tax exempt property by 2022.
- Utilize revenue to allow for rent subsidies to individuals who are re-establishing their lives.
- Continue to provide winter shelter services, and work towards year round shelter funded through BC Housing
- Utilize resources to potentially increase number of affordable housing units available in the surrounding area. However, this does not prevent us from exploring other options for low-income community members.
- Continue to provide all sources of safe, stable and affordable housing helping to create a prosperous future for Castlegar residents. That is why, in 2015, CDCSS purchased the property in Blueberry, and in the future will continue investing in affordable housing if the need continues.
- Moving forward, we will immediately begin to put the strategy into action. And we will continue working closely with our partners to implement our strategy.
- Continue to convene the advisory group, comprised of citizens, business owners, professionals, CDCSS staff and board to continue working on a plan that clearly addresses the unique needs of communities throughout the next 5 years.
- As strategies develop, goals will be targeted to more effectively address local needs.
- More individuals and families will have better access to appropriate housing supports.
- An improved housing system will mean healthier neighborhoods and stronger community across Castlegar.

Transforming the housing system is a long-term commitment. It is a commitment we are proud to make because it will improve the quality of life for Castlegar families and individuals. Through this strategy, we are building strong foundations and a better future for today and for years to come. Despite challenging economic times, CDCSS is working hard to support our most vulnerable citizens and offer housing options. This long-term strategy provides a solid base from which to begin fixing problems with the current housing system. We are making housing services more accessible and effective by putting people first.

## MANAGEMENT /STAFF/ VOLUNTEER FUNCTIONS



**Key Employees**

NAME OR TITLE	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

**Highlighted Plans**

Motel currently is comprised of 6 units, with 4 having separate bedrooms, and 2 studios. 2 units currently have fully functioning kitchenettes.

CDCSS will be installing kitchenettes into all units. This will consist of compact kitchen sets (includes fridge, stove), and cabinets.

CDCSS will install a fire system to allow for higher numbers of individuals accessing winter shelter (application for fulltime shelter submitted)

CDCSS has applied for a food recovery and distribution program to include communal gardening at the new location (to involve a variety of volunteer partners to help provide the education and support with gardening)



CDCSS will be implementing a variety of programming at new location (to include: return to work program, AA/NA

## An Effective Communications Strategy and Recommendations:

etc)

A detailed communication strategy will be developed for CDCSS Affordable housing project.

This strategy will work to include:

- Newsletters distributed members, agencies, and potential stakeholders and community partners.
- Information posted on websites and social media

Audiences will include:

- Community stakeholders
- Community groups etc
- Society members
- Community members
- Website and facebook visitors

Key messages will include:

- Need for affordable housing
- CDCSS information on housing project
- Any donations, fundraising or grants
- Recognition of all donors and sponsors
- Tenant impact statements when available

Other communication to community and tenants.

- Service is accessible and low income focused
- Confidentiality and privacy will be respected at all times
- Application online
- Contact Information
- Awareness of key sponsors and partnerships.
- Clients are partners in their plan of care and have the right to make decisions
- Help is available for families

Communications activities will include:

- Targeted E-mails
- Presentations when requested
- Print media
- Information provided at AGM
- Facebook updates
- Radio ads

### Recommendations

1. The need and demand for supportive housing and supportive services in Castlegar is strong. There are few choices in the community. The CDCSS Affordable Housing project has plans to implement subsidized housing when revenue allows, and support services will continue.
2. There are decisions to be made when it comes to moving forward in the future. Each model has their strengths and weaknesses for reasons that include:
  - cost effectiveness
  - risk
  - accessibility
  - client affordability
  - and ability to provide clients the opportunity to stabilize
3. Tenants come with their own barrier and complex needs. Consequently, careful attention to the development of an appropriate service mix is needed. Services needed often include:
  - health care
  - mental health and addictions support
  - case management services
  - assistance with basic needs
  - outreach services
  - counselling
4. Acting as a local solution offers the ability to help more people, enter into a larger selection of innovative partnerships and potentially access a greater pool of funding opportunities. It is recommended that the program's jurisdiction assist the Castlegar and district area. In doing so it would make partnerships with agencies easier and help to open doors to funding. Regional solutions are highly regarded and viewed as a funding priority in the Kootenays.
5. Meeting the needs of a complex client population, living in rural and remote communities in a large geographic area will require partnerships designed to meet needs at a regional level.
6. There are opportunities for funding, provided the right steps are taken and the right parties are consulted.
7. There are many marginalized populations and a great many socioeconomic disadvantages creating many complexities and needs. It is recommended that very careful attention and an appropriate level of thought and planning go into creating a safe, caring and affordable atmosphere for people to regain control of their lives. CDCSS will continue to work on identifying specific disadvantaged populations, key barriers to healthy lives, unintended negative impacts, and strategies to eliminate or alleviate these barriers, stigmas and negative outcomes.



**TIMELINES**

WHAT	WHO	COMPLETION
Closing on Purchase	Executive Director Board of Directors	January 29,2021
Possession	Executive Director Board of Directors	January 30,2021
Cleaning	Winter shelter staff	January 30,2021 – February 6, 2021
Moving	Executive Director Shelter Staff	January 30 – 2021- February 6, 2021
Install of fire system	Electrician	January 30 – 2021- February 6, 2021
Install of Kitchenettes and other conversion items	Maintenance	February 1, 2021 – April 1, 2021
Shelter move (clients)	Shelter staff	February 6, 2021
Tenant application intakes	Tenant committee	February 2021
Tenant move in	Executive Director Site Manager	March 1, 2021
Completion of Tenant move in	Executive Director Site Manager	April 1, 2021

Closure of Winter Shelter (if unsuccessful with year round funding)	Shelter staff	March 31, 2021
Shelter clean up	Shelter Staff	April 1, 2021
Hiring of Shelter staff	Site Manager and Executive Director	October 2021
Reopening of shelter (if unsuccessful with year round)	Executive Director Site Manager	November 1, 2021
Tenant outreach and services	Site Manager and outreach staff	Ongoing
Continue to apply for renovation and capital funding	Executive Director	Ongoing- Bank will keep mortgage open for contributions to be applied to upcoming mortgage.

- CDCS has applied for year round shelter funding

## Sustainability Plan

- ◆ Establish a “three strikes and you’re out” policy for dealing with tenant issues. This will assist in lost revenue with Tenants not paying rent.
- ◆ Improve communication with tenants and meet with them to discuss problems before matters escalate to eviction, utilizing mediation prior to enforcement.
- ◆ Try to build a greater sense of community by allowing tenants to organize social events such as barbecues, garage sales and block parties. As the space has a large park like yard, it can be established to create a communal setting.
- ◆ Develop a “peer counseling” service for tenants. Creation of Tenant meeting will allow for well established tenants to help those that are struggling. Also, included is AA/NA
- ◆ Increase involvement with Community Police stations and educate residents regarding drugs, crime and safety. (This will be done through our Overdose Prevention team (DOPE)
- ◆ Allow tenants to pay ½ months rent and give the keys early. This provides the appearance of “free rent” and may help to reduce the time necessary to fill vacancies in market rent units.
- ◆ Connect tenants that are not receiving agency subsidy with Income Supports for additional subsidy.
- ◆ Develop tenant councils, getting them involved in managing tenant issues.
- ◆ Pre-screen applicants and do more checking into the state of the applicants’ health and their ability to live independently.



- ◆ Involve tenants in return to work program with the agency.
- ◆ Work towards converting garage into studio to increase rental income.
- ◆ Apply for funding through BC Housing and CBT for renovations and energy retrofits (have been successful with over \$100,000 in the past)
- ◆ Set up Board training programs and have Board members assist with oversight.
- ◆ Work with BC Housing on any options for bulk purchase
- ◆ Reach out to other funders and large business for donations of items (ie: minor damaged appliances, furniture etc) We have again been successful in the past. Also continue to seek operational funding, capital funding, and program funding.
- ◆ Work with any skilled labour needs to obtain a discounted rates.

### Housing History at CDCSS

CDCSS has a long history of managing safehomes, and in that time we have secured funding and added a 2<sup>nd</sup> safe home in 2018. We have secured additional funding to provide upgrades and renovations in these projects. One of the houses is owned by BC Housing, the other is owned by CDCSS. All CDCSS housing will assist with staffing costs. Our Blueberry housing will also support the Site Manager role.

Blueberry Housing has 6 – 2 bedroom units and sits on 1 acre. It is owned by CDCSS and mortgaged at the Kootenay Savings and Credit Union. CDCSS was able to find capital contributions in the amount of \$90,000, and obtained a mortgage of \$310,000 in May of 2015. The monthly payment is set at \$1680.00 plus interest. We have successful built up a savings of close to \$20,000 for renovations and replacement costs. With Blueberry, we were successful in \$75,000 in renovation grant (allowing for upgrades in electrical, driveway, fencing etc), as well as an energy retrofit grant of over \$20,000 (insulation, hotwater tank etc), as well as a fortis program that provided 4 new refrigerators and insulation for piping. CDCSS also worked with BC Housing to obtain some funding for maintenance, and they contribute now \$1200.00 per month.

Office – CDCSS purchased the office building in 2005 at the amount of \$155,400. We currently have a balance owing of \$52,000. This is a mortgage with the Kootenay Savings and Credit Union, and is set at payments weekly of \$233.00.

In the past, our agency has received assistance with funding to replace carpets, windows and other miscellaneous items. We have worked with plumbers and electricians, and are able to receive discounted labor.

CDCSS has an ongoing maintenance person who provides a discounted rate of \$25.00/hr, and will secure necessary items needed at low cost. We are not charged more for overtime or weekend call out. All computer work done by maintenance is done as a volunteer.

We are experienced with building ownership, and ensure well maintained environments that are clean and safe for staff and tenants. We anticipate continued success in our requests for funding assistance to help maintain all of our buildings.



CDCSS also provides all units with eco friendly heaters and de-humidifiers. This helps to lessen our electricity costs, as well as prevention of mold due to the high humidity in our area.

## Conclusion

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Castlegar and District Community Services Society is pleased to present this proposal for your review. We look forward to partnering with you to provide shelter and housing services to the homeless in our area.

Affordable housing was clearly one of the most important issues in our area, and we are looking to not only continue to build on what we are doing, but to make an impact within our community. We welcome the opportunity to create a strong and reliable and long-term partner” in tackling what you recognize as a housing crisis.

In this proposal, we can demonstrate to you that our Agency has strong and capable knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing Castlegar, given that our Agency has successfully added many services and programming for the homeless to date. We are in many ways stronger today than in the past, and our abilities are solid in facing the challenge of housing affordability in Castlegar. We are optimistic, and as a affordable housing providers are ready to expand and support the homeless in our community.

A first step is a solid commitment in the affordable housing as an urgent priority for the homeless, and , clearly understanding the right to housing for everyone requires a commitment to to continuously seeking new and increasing the funding for all aspects of building and supports to tenants.

Also, we need to educate our community and begin to see affordable housing as a basic need, like food, water , electricity, as well as to create success in our community. CDCSS is experienced in providing decent, safe, affordable housing.

We thank you for considering our proposal, and look forward to answering any further questions.

Regards,

Kristein Johnson (she / her)

Castlegar and District Community Services Society

