



Registry *insite*



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message from the chair

Gerald Rougeau, BC Kinsmen Housing Network

This is an exciting time for members of The Housing Registry. We are introducing our new application forms and making significant improvements to Housing Connections. Once these steps are complete, Registry membership will be even more valuable.

The new application and supplemental application forms represent many years of hard work with the objective of serving our clients better. We will all soon benefit from all that sweat! Rather than lumping all applicants together, the new forms allow us to identify different types of clients and we will no longer be raising false hopes with people who may not find our housing appropriate.



All Registry members are currently providing updated building profiles. Once this information is entered into Housing Connections, our software system will be a powerful matching tool for applicants and units. My thanks to all those who are working so hard on this rollout. We will make sure that anyone who needs training receives it. The changes are straightforward and, for new members, the system will be even more user-friendly.

The applicant eligibility review is one of the reasons why the year ahead looks so promising for The Housing Registry. The new Council is committed to marketing the

Registry to new members and to visiting communities to offer training and information on Housing Connections.

I would like to thank our members for allowing us to get to this point. Please encourage your colleagues to give the Registry a try; I'm sure that once they understand its benefits, they will also want to be members.

If you have any comments or questions about The Housing Registry and/or *Registry Insite*, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Gerald
604-530-2100
kinhome@uniserve.com

articles

Meet The Housing Registry Council

The Housing Registry Council consists of representatives from housing providers (three members from distinct large providers and two members from distinct small providers), the BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA), the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC (CHF-BC), community associations, and BC Housing.

2007/08 Council Members

Doug Creba, Vice-Chair



Doug is a Tenant Support Worker and Property Manager for Nanaimo Affordable Housing Society. He participates on the Council as a rep from small housing provider. "When I was first introduced to the registry system it made so much sense I felt I could do a lot to encourage greater participation," said Doug.

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doug@nahs.ca

Kate Joy



Kate is Senior Property Manager at Capital Region Housing Corporation where she has worked for 18 years. The Housing Corporation was established in 1982 by the Capital Regional District to build and manage housing for low- and moderate-income families, seniors and persons with special needs. Membership in The Housing Registry and participation on the Council assists the Housing Corporation with its commitment to improving housing opportunities for the citizens of the Capital Regional District in the years to come.

250-388-6422
kjoy@crd.bc.ca



Darren Kitchen

Darren Kitchen is the Government Relations Director at CHF BC, responsible for political liaison, election campaign efforts, leaky co-ops and new co-op development. CHF BC has been involved with The Housing Registry since its inception and has an appointed seat on the Council. Active participation in the Council is important for CHF BC in order to ensure that The Housing Registry takes into consideration the unique needs of co-operative housing developments.

604-879-5111 (ext. 144)

dkitchen@chf.bc.ca

Jag Klair



Jag is Supervisor, Affordable Housing Programs, Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation. Jag joined the housing team at Metro Vancouver in 2002. She sits on The Housing Registry Council as she believes that quality affordable housing is the foundation of strong, safe and healthy communities.

604-432-6312

jklair@metrovancover.org

Bill Richardson



Bill is the Comptroller at Affordable Housing Society and is also a Past Chair of the Registry Council. Affordable Housing is a non-profit society providing assistance to families, seniors and singles in the Lower Mainland for over 20 years. The Society joined and promoted the Registry from its inception to aid potential tenants to apply for much needed housing in the easiest manner possible. The fact that Affordable Housing enjoyed some economic efficiencies came as a bonus.

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Gerald Rougeau, Chair



Gerald is the BC Kinsmen Housing Network's Executive Director and is serving his second term as the Council's Chair. When asked why he sits on the Housing Registry council and is a champion for the Registry, Gerald replies "To make a difference for our children, as they are our future and our future leaders."

604-530-2100

kinhome@uniserve.com



Erin Smandych, Secretary

Erin is BC Housing's Manager, Housing Services. Erin joined BC Housing in 1990 as a Housing Assistant helping applicants with their search for housing. Erin is now the Manager of Housing Services and sees every day how The Housing Registry assists applicants and streamlines processes for housing providers. Erin is the BC Housing representative on the Council and serves as Secretary to the Council.

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esmandych@bchousing.org

Julia Sundell



Julia is the Administrator at Skeena Place, an assisted living development that opened in 2006. She also sits on the Board of the BC Non Profit Housing Association where she holds the position of Northern Director. BCNPHA has been a key partner in the Registry since its inception over 10 years ago and Julia is BCNPHA's representative on the Council. "I sit on the Council because I believe that while The Housing Registry is an excellent tool for some types of housing providers, it does require some modification that would allow it to be beneficial for all types of housing providers," said Julia.

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skeenaplace@bulkley.net

Ann Todd



Ann is the Activity Director at Beulah Garden Homes Society, a non-profit organization in east Vancouver committed to providing the best possible quality of life for a diverse population of seniors. "Beulah Garden Homes Society decided to run for the Registry Council so that we can do our part to create a system that meets the needs of seniors in our communities," said Ann.

604-255-7707

bentall.beechwood@shaw.ca

Soraya VanBuskirk



Soraya is an Advocacy Programs Manager for Newton Advocacy Group Society. She joined the Society in 1999 and advocates for people dealing with poverty related matters. She now manages the Welfare Advocacy Program, Poverty Law Program and the Homelessness Prevention Strategy programs that include the Housing and Income Supports Program and the Housing Stabilization Project. She also assists in the management of the agency. "Belonging to the Registry and being one of its access points gives our clients more opportunities to find places to live," said Soraya.

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Revised application form and new supplemental application form mark first steps in applicant eligibility review

For the first time in over a decade, people applying to The Housing Registry will be filling out a revised application form. The updated form, which was introduced in March, gives members better matching capabilities to potential tenants. The new form is also easier for clients to use. Many of the questions remain the same, but have been reorganized and there is more space for responses. There are three new questions: one about Aboriginal self-identification; a multi-part question about health and mobility; and the third question allows applicants to provide more specific information regarding the type of housing that would suit their needs.

Along with the revised application form, a new supplemental application form is being introduced. This form provides specific information from a third party about an applicant's current housing situation and any particular housing needs they have. "This form supports housing providers that give additional consideration to applicants who are homeless, fleeing domestic abuse, or who have a serious health condition affected by their current housing," said Erin Smandych, Manager, Housing Services, BC Housing.

A steering committee, with representatives from The Housing Registry, BC Non Profit Housing Association, BC Housing and the provincial government's Office of Housing Construction Standards, guided the application revision process. "By allowing room for expanded information, and through the introduction of the supplemental application form, we will now formally gather information that was previously received on an ad hoc basis from a variety of sources," said Smandych.

Database will be a powerful matching tool

Information from the new forms will be entered into Housing Connections. The review identified that additional information was required on buildings to effectively match applicants to units that meet their needs. Therefore, Housing Registry members are currently supplying expanded information about their buildings that will also be entered into the database. This enhanced information on buildings will result in a powerful matching tool ensuring that applicants are not waitlisted for buildings that do not meet their needs. The new database is scheduled to go live in June 2008.

Housing Registry members retain autonomy in their selection of tenants and continue to establish their own policies and procedures for prioritizing and selecting eligible applicants. The enhanced database will assist members by providing more detailed information on an applicant's housing need and automating processes that are currently done manually.

New eligibility criteria for BC Housing units

For BC Housing, the new and revised forms are the first steps to adjusting its eligibility criteria to ensure greater equity and transparency for applicants. "Our role is to find the best match between an applicant's needs and the housing options to meet those needs," said Margaret McNeil, Vice President, Operations. "To that end, we are working on a new method of selecting tenants for public housing based on categories of need. These changes in eligibility and tenant selection may be adopted by Registry members, but all Housing Registry members will continue to have the ability to follow their own established eligibility requirements and tenant selection procedures."

Housing Connections update

With the new application forms now in use and updated information on member buildings being collected, our Housing Connections software is on the verge of becoming a much more powerful tool for matching applicants with appropriate housing.

From now till June, Housing Registry staff at BC Housing will be contacting Housing Registry members to gather information on housing developments and loading the new information into the database. Staff will be also working to convert existing applicant files to include all the information from the new forms. User acceptance testing on the updated Housing Connections software will be conducted in late April/early May and training for Housing Registry members is planned for June with a system launch scheduled at the end of June. A schedule with options for training dates will be forwarded to members in May.

Member profile: Newton Advocacy Group Society

Located in the heart of Surrey, the Newton Advocacy Group Society (NAGS) provides information, support, referrals and advocacy for low-income individuals including mental health consumers, persons with disabilities, women and single mothers. A member of The Housing Registry since 2006, NAGS also acts as a registry access point. The group assists applicants with completing Housing Registry forms and works with them to ensure that applications are kept up to date and that these accurately reflect an applicant's housing needs.

“Housing is a huge issue for our client base,” explained Soraya VanBuskirk, the agency's Advocacy Programs Manager. “Belonging to the registry and being one of its access points gives our clients more opportunities to find places to live. Our reason for joining was primarily to be able to serve our clients in a greater capacity.”



The staff of the Newton Advocacy Group Society.

NAGS has four programs that directly address housing issues: the Poverty Law Program, dealing with residential tenancy matters; the Housing and Income Supports Program, assisting with the prevention of loss of housing and access to adequate income supports; the Housing Stabilization Project provides support in maintaining housing for the hard to house and cyclical homeless; and Project Comeback, a program for homeless day labourers. The group provides clients with information on tenant rights and responsibilities, mediates with landlords, represents clients in dispute resolution hearings, and assists them in applying for subsidized housing.

About the new application forms now in use Soraya said, “Anything that better defines appropriate housing for clients and makes the process smoother is positive. The length of the form can appear daunting, but with access points such as NAGS to help, we’ll end up with a clearer picture of what a client’s housing needs are.”

New address for BC Housing’s Home Office

If you plan to visit BC Housing’s Home Office soon or need to mail something to us, please note that we have a new suite number. If you are visiting, please take the elevator to the seventeenth floor, rather than the sixth. To reach us by mail:

BC Housing
1701 - 4555 Kingsway
Burnaby B.C. V5H 4V8

All phone numbers and regional office addresses remain the same.

statistics

2007 was a very busy year for The Housing Registry – check out these numbers!

10,755 applications received – 94% processed within 10 days.

Applicant Placements By Location*	Regular Applicants	Priority Placements	Total Placements
Lower Mainland	1,082	69	1,151
Vancouver Island	382	28	410
Southern Interior	72	0	72
Northern Interior	185	11	196
Total	1,721	108	1,829

*Includes applicants housed by all Housing Registry members

Call Centre 2007	Jan – Mar	Apr – June	Jul – Sep	Oct – Nov
Inquiry line calls	18,221	17,713	16,018	15,507
Average wait time	24 seconds	29 seconds	31 seconds	21 seconds
Abandonment Rate*	3 %	3 %	2 %	1%
Telephone Service Factor**	80 %	87.9 %	88 %	94%

*Represents the percentage of calls abandoned after waiting in the queue a minimum of 90 seconds.

**Telephone Services Factor represents the percentage of calls answered within 90 seconds of going into the queue.

www.bchousing.org

Feedback? Questions? Story ideas? Contact the editor.

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