

Social Planning Council of Williams Lake Launches Williams Lake Rent Bank

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The Social Planning Council of Williams Lake and Area has recently partnered with CMHA – Cariboo Chilcotin Branch and BC Rent Bank to pilot a rent bank for the community of Williams Lake.

Safe, affordable housing is one of the most critical needs people have and as the rental market continues to tighten, maintaining existing housing is crucial. Once someone has lost their housing, it can be close to impossible to find new housing, let alone housing that is affordable. Rent banks provide one time assistance to those who's housing is at risk due to a short-term financial crisis. That could be disruption in employment, a health crisis, or an unexpected expense such as a car repair.

"Maintaining stable housing has always been important", says Anne Burrill, Executive Director of Social Planning Council, "and it's even more critical now, because rents are going up rapidly and rental vacancy and availability are very low. This project is one of the strategies identified in the Thrive Poverty Reduction Plan that we completed last year, and we are excited to be launching it with our partners."

"CMHA-CCB is pleased to partner with the Social Planning Council of Williams Lake and area to provide assistance to those who are struggling with financial difficulties" says Janice Breck, Executive Director of CMHA. The rent bank can provide repayable loans to low-moderate income applicants who need one-time assistance to avoid eviction due to non-payment of rent, or who are at risk of losing heat or other utilities. Applications are available online, and a case manager is available at CMHA – Cariboo Chilcotin Branch to assist with the application. Information about eligibility and how to apply is available by calling 250-305-4426 or online at <https://cariboo.cmha.bc.ca/williams-lake-rent-bank/>

The Social Planning Council gratefully acknowledges the financial support of BC Rent Bank, Williams Lake and District Credit Union, Community Futures Cariboo Chilcotin, and Mike Austin Financial Services for this project. "We're so pleased to partner with the Social Planning Council of Williams Lake and Area and CMHA Cariboo Chilcotin in offering these services to renters whose housing stability is at risk due to a unexpected and immediate crisis. We know that rent banks not only assist with financial resources, but help renters navigate community resources that help to stabilize their housing over the long term." Melissa Giles, Project Lead, BC Rent Bank.

About Social Planning Council of Williams Lake and Area

The Social Planning Council of Williams Lake focuses on enhancing, encouraging and supporting social and economic development that improves social well-being for residents in Williams Lake and area. They work in collaboration with partner organizations across the community to support and work toward a healthy quality of life for all those who live in and use the services available in our community.

Website: www.wlspc.ca

About CMHA – Cariboo Chilcotin Branch

The Canadian Mental Health Association is a national charity focused on helping maintain and improve mental health for all Canadians. CMHA – Cariboo Chilcotin Branch offers a wide range of services to the community of Williams Lake, including counselling support, crisis intervention, family support, victim services, and housing and homelessness services.

Website: www.cariboo.cmha.bc.ca

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About BC Rent Bank

BC Rent Bank is a project of Vancity Community Foundation and funded by the Province of B.C. The mandate of the BC Rent Bank is to support the funding of existing rent banks; to provide support and seed funding for the establishment of new rent banks in B.C.; and, to create the infrastructure necessary to support a potential future province-wide rent bank system or service. For more information or to find your local rent bank, visit bcrentbank.ca.