
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Attorney General
and Responsible for Housing
BC Rent Bank

B.C. becomes first province to provide 100% rent bank coverage

VANCOUVER – Low- to moderate-income renters in every part of British Columbia now have access to rent bank services through an extended partnership between BC Rent Bank and the Kamloops and District Elizabeth Fry Society.

"I'd like to extend my gratitude to the BC Rent Bank and Kamloops and District Elizabeth Fry Society for its work to help people in financial distress in our province," said David Eby, Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing. "Rent banks are temporary solutions for some people in housing crisis. While they are not the ultimate solution to affordable housing generally, the services rent banks offer are vital to prevent homelessness and must be available to all British Columbians. I'm very proud these essential services are now offered in every part of the province."

Rent banks provide interest-free loans for tenants in urgent circumstances so they do not lose their housing. BC Rent Bank, a project of the Vancity Community Foundation, is partnering with the Kamloops and District Elizabeth Fry Society on an interim basis to centralize rent bank services throughout the province. This means people in communities that did not previously have access to rent bank loans and services, including on Vancouver Island, in the south Okanagan and in northern B.C., can now access help to stay in stable housing wherever they are in the province.

"Today, renters in every corner of B.C. have access to rent bank loans and services. This is a major milestone for our project to achieve, considering that two years ago there were seven rent bank locations primarily in the Metro Vancouver area," said Melissa Giles, project manager, BC Rent Bank. "Rent banks are much more than lenders. We are very much focused on the whole person – the renter who is experiencing housing insecurity and financial shocks – and we are striving to care for their well-being beginning with stable and safe housing."

BC Rent Bank, which is supported by a \$10-million investment from the provincial government, is working to secure long-term partners to provide rent bank services in each of the newly covered 15 regions to localize services and support the delivery of other wraparound services to rent bank clients.

"We are excited to take on this interim role because we understand first-hand that there is a deep need for rent bank services and being able to receive these applications translates into many more renters having access to emergency funding to stabilize their housing," said Cassandra Schwarz, executive director, Kamloops and District Elizabeth Fry Society.

Rent banks are housing stability and homelessness prevention resources that renters can turn

to during unexpected interruptions to income that jeopardize their housing. The interest-free loans can be applied to tenants' rent or essential utilities, or toward the deposit or first month's rent for tenants who have secured housing but are unable to pay these requirements.

BC Rent Bank is a project of Vancity Community Foundation and funded by the Province of B.C.

Quick Facts:

- The 15 new regional districts that now have access to rent bank services are Alberni-Clayoquot, Bulkley-Nechako, Cariboo, Central Coast, Comox, Cowichan Valley, Fraser-Fort George, Kitimat-Stikine, Mount Waddington, Northern Rockies, South Okanagan, Peace River, Qathet, North Coast, Squamish-Lillooet and Strathcona.
- This represents the final 8% of B.C.'s renter population across 15 regional districts who, until now, had not been covered.
- To apply for rent bank loans in communities within the 15 regional districts that have new coverage, tenants must live in or be moving to the community serviced and should apply online: www.bcrentbank.ca/apply
- The Kamloops and District Elizabeth Fry Society is a community-based charitable/non-profit agency that offers programs and services in the areas of housing and community justice to people in the Kamloops area, with a focus on women and families. For more information, visit: www.kamloopsefry.com

Learn More:

To find a list of communities that are served by BC Rent Bank, visit:

<https://bcrentbank.ca/locations/>

To learn about the steps the Province is taking to tackle the housing crisis and deliver affordable homes for British Columbians, visit: <https://workingforyou.gov.bc.ca/>

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