

WHAT IS SOCIAL HOUSING?

Social housing is non-profit housing. It goes beyond the logic of profit. Its purpose is to house low-income people. It belongs to the collectivity instead of belonging to private interests. Further, it is subsidized by various levels of government, allowing it to offer housing at a price that tenants can afford to pay.

There are three major kinds of social housing described in this brochure:

- **Housing Co-operatives (co-ops);**
- **Non-Profit Housing (NPH);**
- **Low-Rent Housing (HLM).**

● **Housing Co-operatives (Co-ops)**

Co-operatives are managed by their members who collectively own their building(s), while remaining tenants in their own apartments.

The members of the co-operative are responsible for the management and upkeep of the buildings. "Involvement" is the key word to remember if you're thinking about living in a co-op. Member participation is fundamental to the success of the co-op. You can be involved as a member of the Board of Directors or through a specific committee (finance, repairs, etc.). Member involvement also includes participating in General Assemblies and in collective tasks (painting days, cleaning common spaces, etc.).

The General Assembly fixes the price of rents, which are generally lower than what one would find on the private market. Some tenants with a lower income can benefit from subsidies allowing them to have a rent they can afford to pay (generally 25% of their income).

● **Non-Profit Housing (NPH)**

Non-Profit Housing are managed by Boards of Directors made up of people active in the community but not necessarily tenants in the apartments they're looking after. Tenants can also sit on the Board – this is even obligatory for NPH built after 1996.

Lower-income tenants receive subsidies generally allowing them to pay 25% of their income toward rent. Other tenants have a rent lower than average market price.

NPH are often designed for tenants in specific situations (senior citizens, street-associated populations, etc.). In these cases, support from community organizations can be included: accompaniment in navigating public services, assistance with personal budgeting, organization of collective activities, etc.

● **Low-Rent Housing (HLM)**

Low-Rent Housing is public property. It belongs to the state. It is managed by the *Offices municipaux d'habitation* (OMH). All tenants in HLM pay rent equal to 25% of their income (plus certain fees).

There are certain conditions that determine your eligibility for Low-Rent Housing, like household income and citizenship status. At the OMH, applications are ranked using a point system based on elements like income level and seniority. Some applications can take on a higher priority, for example cases of conjugal violence, damaged apartments or apartments declared unhealthy or unsafe.

There are different ways for HLM tenants to get involved, for example by participating in their local tenants' association.

Unfortunately, neither the provincial nor federal government have constructed any new HLM since 1994 and it can take a long time to access this resource.

HOW TO APPLY

Co-ops

To become a member of and live in a co-op, you have to write a letter to the projects that interest you or to your regional co-operative federation. Some housing committees also have waiting lists.

NPH

To apply for Non-Profit Housing, you can contact the regional federation of NPH, or the housing committee in your area.

HLM

To get on the waiting list, you need to fill out a form provided by the OMH in your area. You can get this form from your local housing committee.

FINDING YOUR LOCAL HOUSING COMMITTEE

You can find a list of these committees in the "Besoin d'aide" section of the FRAPRU's website, at www.frapru.qc.ca.

THE PRIVATE MARKET DOESN'T WORK!

The FRAPRU is convinced that the right to housing should not be subject to the laws of the market, which cannot, and does not seek to, respond to the needs of poorly-housed families and individuals. That's why we aim for the continual growth of the percentage of social housing in the overall rental market, currently only at 11%.

To meet only the most urgent needs, the FRAPRU demands that the Quebec and Canadian governments finance the construction of 50 000 social housing units over five years, including 20 000 HLM and 30 000 co-ops and NPH.

To this end, the FRAPRU and its member-groups organize popular education activities and political actions. To find out more and participate in this fight, you can contact any of the member groups that can be found on the list on the FRAPRU's website

GET INFORMED! GET INVOLVED!

The FRAPRU

The *Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain* (FRAPRU) is a Quebec-wide association with some 155 member organizations. It fights for the right to housing, principally through the promotion of social housing. The FRAPRU is also involved in the struggle against poverty and other social injustices.

For more information :
www.frapru.qc.ca.

YOUR LOCAL COMMITTEE

WHY NOT SOCIAL HOUSING?



2013, July

