



# Top 10 sustainability action list

for housing co-operatives

## 1 Value co-op housing's social sustainability

Your co-op provides an affordable housing solution and helps your members meet their needs.

- Go beyond your co-op and support initiatives in your community that help people meet their basic needs.
- Advocate for affordable and healthy housing that helps to build security and well-being.

## 2 Encourage co-op participation in community building efforts

- Community can forge a sense of belonging and identity for your members.
- Community building can involve activities in your co-op or in the community beyond your co-op.

## 3 Reduce your energy use impact

- An energy audit will help your members set priorities to replace inefficient lighting, appliances, windows, improve ventilation, upgrade insulation, improve boilers and furnaces, toilets, showerheads and faucets.
- Find out about sources of alternative energy in your area such as wind, solar or geothermal power, which may allow your co-op to switch completely from fossil-fuel energy use.
- Investigate what energy-efficiency incentives or grants might be available for your members, and/or consider creating internal incentives to encourage and reward energy efficiency in your membership.

## 4 Buy local

- Revise your purchasing policies to ensure that you purchase locally produced, recyclable, energy-efficient, long-life and non-toxic products wherever possible.
- Explore local food sources and make this information available to your members and encourage them to use these products.
- Consider joining local food-buying clubs and community food kitchens.

## 5 Reuse

Find ways to maintain and extend the use of co-op equipment and encourage members to reuse with free stores, member swaps and other initiatives.

## 6 Recycle

- Join community recycling programs or start your own.
- Compost your organic waste either with a co-op compost or individual unit worm composters.
- Use mature compost for co-op gardens, or donate it to community gardens.
- Look into how your co-op can recycle electronic equipment.

## 7 Reduce the use of toxic products

This includes any product with an impact on the natural environment and human health, e.g., things that give off gas, solvents, toxic paints, pesticides, and herbicides.

## 8 Encourage energy-efficient transportation

- Members can find ways to decrease vehicle use, get involved in co-operative car sharing, bicycle sharing, trip reduction planning.
- Your co-op can look for ways to provide incentives, e.g., reduced fees on transit passes, membership discounts in car sharing, or even car-pooling within your co-op.

## 9 Develop water conservation efforts

- In addition to installing water conservation toilets and water-efficient fixtures, your co-op could use rainwater capture, with rain barrels and rain gardens.
- Other options to reduce water use are use of a grey water recycling system, drought resistant landscaping with native plants, and removing impervious surfaces in gardens.

## 10 Develop and maintain your co-op's green space

- If your co-op doesn't have much green space, look for ways you could increase natural habitat.
- If your co-op already has a green space, consider adding more oxygen-rich native plants and trees to help preserve the natural benefits of cleaner air, wildlife habitat and recreation and relaxation for your co-op members.
- Also consider gardening for food security by joining community gardening groups, composting, and permaculture gardening.