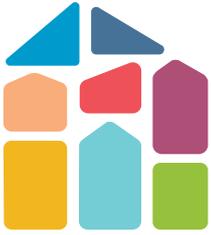




Setting Up a Housing Co-operative



So you want to set up a housing co-operative?

For a period in the 1970s and 1980s local authorities made land available for home-ownership building co-operatives. Some 3,000 homes were built in various parts of the country in projects generally comprising 10 to 60 houses.

Today, it is considerably more difficult for homes to be built through co-operative efforts. The major challenges include land and finances.

Co-operative Housing Ireland is limited in the assistance it can give to individuals and group. However, we would like to hear from you as we use this information in our advocacy work. Please email communications@cooperativehousing.ie and let us know.



The following gives an indication of the challenges faced with setting up a housing co-operative (and of course, it is not necessarily a linear process, for example a business plan could be developed in advance of registering as a Co-operative).

Setting up a Co-operative

There are many benefits incorporating as a co-operative not least the principles and values which include mutual aid, self-help and democratic decision making. To be a co-operative, you need a minimum of 7 members, adopt 'model rules' (Co-operative Housing Ireland can provide a draft version) and apply to the Register of Friendly Societies (<https://www.cro.ie/Society-Union/Overview>).

The publication '[Getting Your Group Ready](#)' booklet and their '[Overview](#)' booklet, developed by Self Organised Architects (soa.ie) is a must read.

The Irish Co-operative Organisation Society (ICOS) have useful tools and advise in setting up a co-operative [click here](#).

Consider whether members should have mortgage approval in advance of joining - as individual mortgages will be required.

Develop a Business Plan

A plan is key to any initiative. The Irish Co-operative Organisation Society (ICOS) have useful template, [click here](#).

Accessing Land

Accessing land that can be built is a significant challenge. Contact your local authority and ask about available sites and determine if your group would be eligible.

Funding

Long-term, individual funding

- Each member must have their own mortgage approval
- The normal Central Bank Rules Apply - deposit, amount borrowed, repayment capacity etc.

Construction Funding (new build)

- This is usually provided by a financial institution who will look for proof of long-term funding and can be expensive.
- Stage payments are usually required by the builder during construction, normally on receipt of an Architect Cert. and within a time frame contained in the building contract.

Sources of finance

Self-build mortgage through a bank, building society, credit union, or local authority.

Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan, now referred to as the Local Authority Home Loan will allow for single applicants with gross income of up to €65,000 in the Greater Dublin Area, Cork and Galway. Further details can be found [here](#).

Alternative sources of finance

Community Finance Ireland: is a Charity which provides loans exclusively to other third sector organisations such as community groups, charities, sports clubs and social enterprises in the Republic of Ireland. Since 2001, as part of the UCIT Group, they have committed in excess of €90 million to over 500 organisations. <https://communityfinanceireland.com/>

Clann Credo: provides affordable loan finance to community, voluntary and charitable organisations, community businesses and social enterprises throughout Ireland and abroad. <http://www.clanncredo.ie>

Other sources of funding

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/owning_a_home/help_with_buying_a_home/

Please note

The process is long and stressful. Therefore:

- Ensure all members can work together in a cohesive team
- Agree on the type and specification of the properties and have only one specification
- Approach the local authority and ascertain if they would sell the land at a nominal price
- At the same time ask if planning is likely to be given for the type and scale of development on the identified site

Useful websites

Student Co-operatives: <https://www.studenthomes.coop/> and scroll down for links:

<https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/what-housing-co-operative>.

You can also view a relevant seminar on the topic here: <https://youtu.be/iRVG--Bkumc>

Self Organised Architects: www.soa.ie

Community Led Homes: <https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/what-housing-co-operative>

Community Led Housing London: <https://www.communityledhousing.london/>

Co-operative Housing International: <https://www.housinginternational.coop/>

Ó Cualann: <https://www.ocualann.ie/>

